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THE CHURCH YEAR

STUDIES FOR THE SUNDAYS, SACRED SEASONS AND SAINTS' DAYS OF THE CHRISTIAN YEAR

BY THE

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LORD BISHOP OF RIPON

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INTRODUCTORY NOTE

BY THE LORD BISHOP OF RIPON

ARCHDEACON ARMITAGE has asked me to write a few lines of preface for his book on the 'Church Year'. Every man who teaches has his own method, and must follow his own line of ministry. Archdeacon Armitage has expressed simply and clearly his own view of the teaching given in the Collects, Epistles, and Gospels of the Church Year. In doing so, however, he endeavours to let the Prayer Book speak its own message, and he is careful to let the Church Year give its complete teaching. He has very happily brought together quotations from various writers to brighten, illustrate, and enforce each lesson.

In all wholesome teaching due proportion of truth will be observed. It is the failing of our own age—perhaps it has been the failing of all ages—to concentrate exaggerated attention upon some one aspect of truth, and to fling every other aspect into obscurity. In this way, no doubt, men's minds are often recalled to some forgotten truth; but the nemesis is sure to come, when truth distorted or deformed is held up as the image of all truth. Happy is the Church whose sober and compre-

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hensive order is a witness against one-sided teaching. However much individual teachers may insist with undue emphasis upon one doctrine, the worshipper under her roof is being quietly taught, as the seasons come and go, that happy and varied range of truth which touches life on every side.

June, 1908.

PREFACE

THE object of this book is almost, if not indeed altogether, devotional. It will in some measure serve its purpose if it calls fresh attention to the great spiritual truths enshrined in the Book of Common Prayer, and awakens a deeper interest on the part of Churchmen in the rich treasures of devotion which the Christian Year provides.

The treatment is in the main expository, and it is designed to couple the heartfelt devotion of the Christian life expressed in sincere and earnest worship with the great outstanding truths of the Word of God. 'God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.' The religion of Jesus Christ was intended to spiritualize all life, and to bring to bear upon our humanity all the rich blessing of a Father's gracious love, the cleansing power of a Saviour's precious blood, and the sanctifying grace of the Holy Spirit.

While it does not profess to be an historical manual, much less a critical discussion of liturgical questions, or of points of interpretation, yet it will be found that it gives much useful information in regard to Church customs, advocates throughout sound Church principles, and aims to build up a devout and earnest type of Christian life.

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The Sacred Seasons of the Christian Year are made to minister, according to their true intention, to the upbuilding of the spiritual life, increasing the spirit of praise and thanksgiving, developing every Christian virtue, providing means for the edification of Christian people, so that they may be built up in their most holy faith, and led ' to do all such good works ', as God has ' prepared ' for them ' to walk in ', to the glory of His holy Name.

It will be noticed that in many instances the Old Testament Lessons are given and their teaching summarized. This method is also followed in regard to the Epistles and Gospels. The same plan, however, could not be carried out with the New Testament Lessons, as they are read consecutively from day to day, and are only heard on the same Sundays, at very long intervals. This feature obtains also in the case of the Psalms.

It is the Author's hope that in these days of enlarged vision of the Church's work, and of world-wide opportunities for missionary expansion ; when the need of vital religion and of the deepening of the spiritual life is so keenly felt, and a revival of religious zeal and earnestness is so much to be desired, this book may fill a distinct want. His prayer is, that God, without whose blessing it can perform no service, will graciously use it to quicken hearts into a deeper love for Christ, lead them to a more complete reliance upon the work of His Holy Spirit, inspire in them a deeper devotion to His sacred cause, and a more reverent worship of His holy Name.

W. J. ARMITAGE.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION BY THE LORD BISHOP OF RIPON	iii
PREFACE	v
THE RATIONALE OF THE CHRISTIAN YEAR	1
THE SEASON OF ADVENT	9
THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD: CHRISTMAS DAY	13
ST. STEPHEN'S DAY	16
ST. JOHN THE EVANGELIST'S DAY	20
THE INNOCENTS' DAY	25
THE CIRCUMCISION OF CHRIST	28
THE EPIPHANY SEASON	31
SEPTUAGESIMA TO LENT	35
THE SACRED SEASON OF LENT	38
ASH WEDNESDAY	43
GOOD FRIDAY	46
EASTER DAY	52
THE FORTY DAYS, FROM EASTER TO ASCENSION	57
ASCENSIONTIDE	63
WHITSUNDAY	68
TRINITY SUNDAY	73
THE SUNDAYS AFTER TRINITY	77
THE FIRST SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY	80
THE SECOND SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY	83
THE THIRD SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY	86
THE FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY	88
THE FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY	91
THE SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY	93
THE SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY	96
THE EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY	99
THE NINTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY	101

PAGE

THE TENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY 104
THE ELEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY . . . 106
THE TWELFTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY . . . 109
THE THIRTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY . . . 113
THE FOURTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY . . 117
THE FIFTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY . . . 120
THE SIXTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY . . . 122
THE SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY . . 125
THE EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY . . . 127
THE NINETEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY . . . 130
THE TWENTIETH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY . . . 133
THE TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY . . 135
THE TWENTY-SECOND SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY . . 138
THE TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY . . 141
THE TWENTY-FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY . . 144
THE TWENTY-FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY . . 147
ST. ANDREW'S DAY 150
ST. THOMAS THE APOSTLE 155
THE CONVERSION OF ST. PAUL 161
THE PURIFICATION OF ST. MARY THE VIRGIN . . 166
ST. MATTHIAS'S DAY 169
THE ANNUNCIATION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY 173
ST. MARK'S DAY 176
ST. PHILIP AND ST. JAMES'S DAY 179
ST. BARNABAS THE APOSTLE 182
ST. JOHN BAPTIST'S DAY 186
ST. PETER'S DAY 191
ST. JAMES THE APOSTLE 195
THE TRANSFIGURATION OF CHRIST 200
ST. BARTHOLOMEW THE APOSTLE 204
ST. MATTHEW THE APOSTLE 209
ST. MICHAEL AND ALL ANGELS 212
ST. LUKE THE EVANGELIST 219
ST. SIMON AND ST. JUDE, APOSTLES 220
ALL SAINTS' DAY 225

THE RATIONALE OF THE CHRISTIAN YEAR

THE Christian Year is the cycle of Sundays, Sacred Seasons, and Saints' Days, which the Church in her wisdom has designed for the celebration of the great events connected with the life of her Divine Lord, the main facts associated with His work of redemption, the descent of the life-giving Spirit, and the truths of His holy religion. It proclaims the Gospel of Divine love, in all its fullness and power, and in due proportion. It teaches all the doctrines of Christianity, as revealed in Holy Scripture, in their right relations, from day to day, and from week to week. Its round of scriptural services shows forth the work of God for His children, from the creation of the world to the day of the glorious appearing of Christ at His second Advent, touching at every stage, from the first promise of the glorious Incarnation of Christ to His triumphant Ascension into heaven.

The historical facts of the redeeming work of the Lord Jesus are first given in their due sequence. The Church Year begins with Advent, which sets forth the preparation for Christ's First Coming, and points forward to His Second Coming in great glory. In a most wisely planned system the Lord Jesus is shown in His holy Incarnation, in His manifestation to the Gentile world, in His Ministry of love and mercy, in His sacred Baptism, His self-denying Fast, and His sore Temptation, in His agony and bloody sweat, in His Cross and Passion, in

His glorious Resurrection and Ascension. The mission and work of the Holy Spirit are dwelt upon at Whitsuntide; while on Trinity Sunday, a day which belongs especially to the Anglican Church, and the Churches influenced by her in Northern Europe, the glorious truths which spring from the truth of the Holy Trinity are emphasized.

The Church Year divides itself naturally into two parts. The first division extends from Advent to Trinity, and is concerned principally with the great facts of our holy religion, and the truths which spring therefrom. It is the season, or division, which deals with fact and faith. The second part, from Trinity to Advent, is given up to practical instruction on the duties of life. It is the season of conduct, of the practice of holy living, the faith of the first part leading to the practice of the second. Creed and deed are thus united. The Saints' Days commemorate the lives of those who have followed their great Master Christ, whose lives proclaim the saving power of His grace, and who have glorified their Lord by their witness even unto death.

There is in the Church Year perfect unity of design, combined with the utmost flexibility, and infinite variety, consistent with its definite purpose to show forth Christ, His work and truth, and to offer to God the worship due to His holy name.

The services provided to meet the spiritual needs of God's children throughout the Church Year are veritably saturated with the Word of God. They are illuminating throughout, for they shine not in their own light, but with that of the truth of God. The prayers are almost altogether in the words of Scripture itself. The Canticles, with a few exceptions, are inspired hymns of praise. The

Psalms, Epistles, Gospels, and Lessons are directly taken from the Divine Word. The venerable Liturgy of our Church, as Edmund Clarence Stedman pointed out, is 'one of the few world-poems . . . the most wonderful symphonic idealization of human faith . . . this poem of poems. I have called it lyrical; it is dramatic in structure and effect.' It knows 'no refuge save trust in the oracles which a just and merciful Protector, a pervading Spirit, a living Mediator and Consoler, has revealed.'

We may well thank God for the splendid provision which is made by the Church for the worship of His great Name, and for the truths enshrined in the Christian Year, from which we may learn His holy will and commandments.

The sacred seasons of the Old Testament Church were of Divine appointment. They were intended of God to promote the spiritual life of His people, to illustrate His revelation of Himself and of His purposes concerning man, to keep alive His gracious dealings with mankind, and to point forward to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. They served many great purposes, and were at once aids to devotion, historic memorials, and prophetic institutions.

The Church Year of the ancient Church of God was typical of richer, better, nobler things to come, all of which are summed up in Christ, 'the fullness of Him that filleth all in all.' Indeed, it may be said, that Christ took some of the Old Testament Festivals, as for instance the Paschal Feast, and gave them a new meaning, and a higher purpose, as in the great Sacrament of remembrance, the Feast of Love, the Gospel token of His great act of full and perfect atonement.

'The old order changeth, yielding place to new,' and in the fullness of time the New Testament Church took the place of the Old. Its Divine Founder declared that He came not to destroy but to fulfil. The New Covenant fulfilled the Old, and while there is an historical connexion, there is a clearly marked distinction as well. The Christian Church, while it is built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ being the chief corner stone, is a living Church, the source and secret of its life being the Holy Spirit of God. While not forgetful of the work of Christ upon earth, or of the labours of His first apostolic witnesses, still we may say with confidence that, historically speaking, the Church of Christ was founded on the Day of Pentecost. The life of the Church found its truest expression in worship and service. Worship it must in adoring love, in the spirit of joyful praise, in expectant prayer, the heart speaking to God.

The Christian Year grew out of the organized worship of the Christian Church. It was a perfectly natural development, deeply spiritual in its conception, and intensely practical in its application. The great Christian Festivals of Christmas, Easter, and Whit-Sunday, indeed all the leading festivals, arose naturally, as Professor Milligan remarks, 'to commemorate in a distinct and individual manner the great facts upon which she rests, the leading doctrines of her faith.' It is to the love of the ideal, wedded to the intensely practical, that we owe the exquisitely beautiful idea of the Christian Year. It was, as Wordsworth says of England's Church, 'By the hands of wisdom rear'd,' and grew

> In beauty of holiness, with order'd pomp,
> Decent and unreproved.

The Church Year is of the greatest practical value, providing as it does a complete system of Christian teaching. It furnishes the best possible means of preventing a one-sided view of Christianity from obtaining place in the minds of Christians, or of the Church as a whole. This is a matter of the highest importance, for we are open to the subtle temptation of laying stress upon some one view of Christian truth, which especially appeals to us, at the expense of some other truth just as necessary for a full-orbed Christianity.

There is immense spiritual help as well, for, as the judicious Hooker pointed out, 'to celebrate these religious and sacred days is to spend the flower of our time happily.' What a power there must be, for instance, in having for four weeks every year, the all-important truths of the first and second Advents of our blessed Lord brought home constantly to the mind. And this not only in Scripture lesson, but in the preached word, in the heart-moving prayer, and in the inspiring hymn. Or again, the marking out of one day in the year, and the centring of all thoughts, of all hopes, of all desires on the personal Christ, as seen in His gracious Incarnation, His precious Death and Passion, His glorious Resurrection, His triumphant Ascension, must have a profound and far-reaching influence upon the heart and mind. The same is true of the coming of the Holy Spirit, which we commemorate at Whitsuntide. Then, we remember, as a stimulating thought for the whole of life, 'The Holy Ghost is come.' The Church looks up to the source and secret of all power, the Spirit of God. And who can estimate the influence the keeping of Trinity Sunday has had in preserving the truth of the Holy Trinity in one eternal Unity, amidst all the changing opinions of men.

The Church Year is itself a constant witness to the truths of our holy religion. It is the creed of creeds, furnishing a complete statement of the plan of Salvation, and it presents the great doctrinal truths of Holy Scripture, not in some cold and heartless form, but in a way which appeals at once to our affections and thoughts.

The Church Year provides for the regular and due observance of Public worship.

The ancient and scriptural offices of Morning and Evening Prayer have voiced the petitions of devout souls for centuries of Christian life, have afforded room for the heart's confession of sin and need, and the trustful acceptance of the Divine promise of forgiveness ; have summed up the profession of faith in the Christian verities ; and have furnished the highest expression of the adoration due to God, the praise which belongs to Him alone, the thanksgiving which we offer for His providential care and love.

The Litany, or General Supplication, which is used in the Sunday services, is especially appropriate for Wednesdays and Fridays. The need of a special service of supplication is apparent in any gathering for Christian worship. Indeed, the Old Testament Church raised its voice in humblest supplication in the inspired Litany of the Psalmist, known as the *Miserere* (Ps. li.). This was most fittingly used at the opening service of the first Pan-Anglican Congress in Westminster Abbey.

The oldest Christian Litany is probably that found in the Apostolical Constitutions, which dates from the end of the third or the beginning of the fourth century. It would be difficult to find a more devotional, spiritual, or comprehensive service of devotion than the Litany of

the Church of England, compiled as it was from many sources by the master mind of Cranmer. Sparrow boldly affirmed that there is not extant anywhere a more particular, excellent enumeration of the Christian's either private or common wants, a more innocent, blameless form, against which there lies no just exception, and no composition so calculated to raise our devotions, or to keep them up throughout. It was said of the Litany, by one of our most devoted Bishops, that it ' is, of all forms of prayer, the most richly Evangelical ', that it ' contains almost the whole Gospel.', and that it resembles ' the golden censer of the Angel in the Apocalypse, filled with much incense, the prayers of all the saints '.

It is not our purpose to study all the offices of the Church, as she makes provision for the devotional and spiritual needs of her children. There are a number which are only of occasional use.

There are two, however, which are required constantly throughout the Church Year.

One is the Ministration of Public Baptism.

This is a necessary service, made so, it is clear, by the fact that the Lord Jesus Christ Himself instituted the Sacrament, with which it is connected. It is not only associated with worship, but an act of worship of the highest kind itself. For Baptism is bound up with an act of faith, is founded upon prayer, and is a sacred ordinance of initiation into Christ's Church, an entrance into a covenant relationship, an enrolment under the banner of the king.

The second service, which is in constant requisition, is that of ' The Administration of the Lord's Supper, or Holy Communion '.

It is connected with the holy institution which our

Lord Jesus Christ made on the same night in which He was betrayed, for the continual remembrance of His Death and Passion, and of the benefits which we receive thereby.

The very words of the Lord Jesus Christ are repeated in the service, and His wish most carefully observed. The acts of the Saviour are performed over again, in the breaking of the Bread, the taking of the Cup, and the Celebration of the Sacrament. As St. Paul declared, 'As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till He come' (1 Cor. xi. 26).

For well-nigh twenty centuries, there has never been a week, never a Sunday, in which the followers of the Lord Jesus Christ have not gathered in some quarter of the world, which Christ came to redeem, in order to remember, in adoring love, the sacrifice of the Death of Christ for our redemption, to receive at His hands the pledges of His love, and in their heart of hearts to feed by faith upon the Bread of Life. This fact is in itself of very great historical significance. It shows the links in that golden chain of fellowship, which binds the believer with His Saviour, and all Christ's believing people in one holy communion and fellowship, throughout all the ages.

There is no Gospel, it has been said, 'like this Feast.' It proclaims to the devout worshipper and to the world the atoning death of Christ. So it appealed to Luther, who said it is 'a visible word presenting that to the soul through the eye which the spoken word presents through the ear'. Indeed, it might well be said, that the two Sacraments are pictorial representations of the Gospel: the Water in Baptism representing the cleansing blood, and the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit,

and the Bread and Wine standing for the death of Christ, with all its life-giving and life-sustaining power:

He devised the Feast of Love,
Thus the coldest heart to move,
Thus to bring Himself more near,
Thus to make Himself more dear.
On the sacred symbols feasting,
All the love of Jesus tasting;
All the Spirit's grace and power—
Oh! the sweetness of that hour.

THE SEASON OF ADVENT

The Collect

ALMIGHTY GOD, give us grace that we may cast away the works of darkness, and put upon us the armour of light, now in the time of this mortal life, in which thy Son Jesus Christ came to visit us in great humility; that in the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious Majesty to judge both the quick and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal, through him who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost, now and ever. *Amen.*

When shall lighten forth Thy sign
Through the heavens? O Lord how long?
When amid the radiant throng,
Shall Thy coming shine?—H. G. TOMKINS.

The night is wellnigh spent: the world fulfils
Her season—on the everlasting hills;
Bright burns the day star! Yet a little more
And all that lets will be for ever o'er.

DEAN BURGON.

Lo! as the venturer, from his stars receiving
Promise and presage of sublime emprise,
Wears evermore the seal of his believing
Deep in the dark of solitary eyes,—
So even I, and with a heart more burning,
So even I, and with a hope more sweet,
Groan for the hour, O Christ, of Thy returning,
Faint for the flaming of Thine Advent feet.

F. W. H. MYERS.

THE First Sunday in Advent is the New Year's Day of the Christian Church. It leads the way in that exquisitely beautiful system known as the Christian Year. The Church, in adopting such a plan for her children, showed the highest wisdom, for while it appeals to the imagination, it also furnishes a carefully planned and most systematic exposition of the Christian Creed.

It is not without reason that the Church does not follow the sun or the moon in their revolutions in fixing times and seasons, but looks rather to Him who is her only Light, even Jesus Christ, and the first day of her year points to His coming at the first, when the incarnate Deity was

> Pleased as man with man to dwell,
> Jesus, our Emmanuel.

The season of Advent heralds the approach of the anniversary of our Lord's Nativity. It is meant to be a time of preparation for the due observance of the Christmas festival, in the spirit of the true Christian, who remembers that all his hopes for time and eternity are bound up with the incarnation of the Son of God.

Advent is usually regarded as a penitential season, and

undoubtedly it has that aspect ; but it is far more, for it looks upward and beyond, and carries in its heart the thought, ' Joy to the world, " The Lord is come." '

The note of the First Sunday in Advent is a trumpet-call to Christians to arise and prepare to meet their King. The Second Sunday proclaims the preciousness of the written word of God, in which the promise is given of Christ's first coming, and which everywhere foretells His second advent. The Third Sunday shows the importance of preaching as a means for preparing the way for the coming of Christ. The Fourth Sunday sums up the lessons of Advent, showing the way in which the testimony of John, as to the Messiahship of Jesus, had been wonderfully fulfilled.

The importance of Advent teaching cannot be overestimated. As all rivers find their way to the sea, so all Scripture points to the second coming of Christ. There are upwards of three hundred texts which point directly to the personal return of Jesus Christ. The Lord Jesus constantly referred to it. More than forty times He used the truth for comfort, for exhortation, for warning.

The personal return of Christ is a great Christian motive. It is a motive for holiness of life. It is a motive for earnest Christian service. It is a motive for missionary enterprise. It is a motive for constant preparation. It is a motive for patience amidst disappointments, and in the face of apparent failure.

The personal return of Christ is a wonderful spiritual stimulus. It is a stimulus to courage, and to perseverance, and to unceasing effort.

The second coming of Christ and our attitude to that truth is a great test in Christian life. It is like a

thermometer, and shows truly our spiritual condition. It tests accurately our sincerity, our purpose in life, and the reality of our religious profession.

The Advent watchwords should be Expectation and Preparation.

The Christian Church is beginning to realize more and more the true spirit of the Advent season. That spirit is not one of gloom and fear, as of impending wrath, but of holy joy, and uplifting hope, and confident expectation. There is nothing that shows this better than our Church hymnology. The older hymns followed the Dies Irae of Thomas of Celano :

> Day of wrath, O day of mourning,
> See the crucified returning,
> Heaven and earth in ashes burning.

The newer hymns breathe rather the spirit of Frances Ridley Havergal :

> O the joy to see Thee reigning,
> Thee my own beloved Lord.

Or there is seen in them the longing of Horatius Bonar :

> We long to hear Thy voice,
> To see Thee face to face,
> To share Thy crown and glory then,
> As now we share Thy grace.

And they are most in accord with Advent thoughts, and Advent hopes when they voice the prayer of Josiah Conder :

> Hasten, Lord ! the promised hour ;
> Come in glory and in power.

THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD

OR THE BIRTH-DAY OF CHRIST, COMMONLY CALLED

CHRISTMAS DAY

The Collect

ALMIGHTY GOD, who hast given us thy only begotten Son to take our nature upon him, and as at this time to be born of a pure Virgin; Grant that we being regenerate, and made thy children by adoption and grace, may daily be renewed by thy Holy Spirit; through the same our Lord Jesus Christ, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the same Spirit, ever one God, world without end. *Amen.*

All my heart this night rejoices
As I hear, far and near, sweetest angel-voices;
'Christ is born!' Their choirs are singing,
Till the air everywhere now with joy is ringing.

PAUL GERHARDT.

Christ, He requires still, whensoe'er He comes
To feed or lodge, to have the best of rooms:
Give Him the choice; grant Him the nobler part
Of all the house—the best of all's the heart.

HERRICK.

Who taught mankind on that first Christmas Day,
What 'twas to be a man; to give, not take;
To serve, not rule; to nourish, not devour;
To help, not crush; if need, to die, not live.
Oh, blessed day, which gives the eternal lie
To self, and sense, and all the brute within.
Tell them once more the tale of Bethlehem;
The kneeling shepherds, and the Babe Divine:
And keep them men indeed, fair Christmas Day.

CHARLES KINGSLEY.

THERE is no message like the message of Christmas, for it carries in its heart, not only 'the hopes and fears of all the years', but all the good tidings of glad Easter Day, and glorious Ascension-tide, and holy Whitsunday. For Christmas commemorates the great central fact of human life, the pivot upon which the history of the world turns, the consummation of the hope of the ages.

The key-note of Christmas Day is to be found in the Angels' song, the multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying :

Glory to God in the highest,
And on earth peace among men in whom He is well pleased.

The heavenly message comes in music and in song, for it carries in its heart great gladness, and enshrines the Gospel, which is the good news of a Saviour's birth.

The whole creation glorifies God. There is, as poets sing, a music in the spheres :

> There 's not the smallest orb which thou behold'st
> But in his motion like an angel sings.

The royal Psalmist who had long ago studied the sun in his mighty splendour, and watched his flocks under night's sparkling hosts, or when the moon was beaming soft and tender, said, 'The heavens declare the glory of God.'

But this glory is of a far higher degree, and is ascribed to God in connexion with His great gift of His dear Son for the salvation of a lost world. God is glorified, as the God of Love, Justice, Wisdom, Mercy, and Holiness.

It is a glorious message of world-wide significance for all men of all time, that the God who rules the world is a God of love and goodness, and mercy and truth.

The Christmas message is one of Peace. On earth

'peace to men and good will'. The Prince of Peace has come down from Heaven to earth. As the Apostle declares of Christ, 'He is our Peace.' Christ makes peace between God and men who have been estranged by sin. And as Peace is the fruitful parent of the spirit of peace, from peace grows peace, peace with God, peace among men, heart united to heart in loving brotherhood.

The Christmas Message is one of Good-Will. 'On earth peace, good will towards men.' To the inestimable blessing of Peace is added Grace. The meaning evidently is, God takes pleasure in men, as the passage is sometimes translated, 'Peace among men in whom He is well pleased.' It is a message of eternal love. God treasures in His heart thoughts of good-will towards us. His Christmas message (may it be said with deepest reverence) is Jesus Christ, His last gift, His best gift, His perfect gift.

It is no wonder then that Christmas is the Festival of the Home-life. It is the time for social gatherings. Then there are many home-comings, and glad meetings of parents and children.

It is the Festival of Childhood, and as such it prevents the heart of man growing old before its time, from the hard contact of a cold world.

It is the Season of Gifts, when friendships are cemented, and hearts are made glad by the thoughtful kindness of others.

It is the Season of Charity and Benevolence, when Christian hearts go out to others who may be in need.

It is all this, and much more, simply because Christmas has behind it the gift of a loving Father to His children. 'Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable Gift.'

The Church expresses her faith, and voices her praise

in the Proper Preface for Christmas Day: 'Because Thou didst give Jesus Christ Thine only Son to be born as at this time for us: who, by the operation of the Holy Ghost, was made very man of the substance of the Virgin Mary his mother; and that without spot of sin, to make us clean from all sin.'

ST. STEPHEN'S DAY

DECEMBER 26

The Collect

GRANT, O Lord, that, in all our sufferings here upon earth for the testimony of thy truth, we may stedfastly look up to heaven, and by faith behold the glory that shall be revealed; and, being filled with the Holy Ghost, may learn to love and bless our persecutors by the example of thy first Martyr Saint Stephen, who prayed for his murderers to thee, O blessed Jesus, who standest at the right hand of God to succour all those that suffer for thee, our only Mediator and Advocate. *Amen.*

The blood of the Martyrs is the seed of the Church.
TERTULLIAN.

Since the first man stood God-conquered with his face to heaven upturned.—JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL.

. . Stephen, an unquenchèd fire.

He heeded not reviling tones,
Nor sold his heart to idle moans,
Though cursed and scorned, and bruised, with stones:

But looking upward, full of grace,
He pray'd, and from a happy place
God's glory smote him on the face.—TENNYSON.

Stephen, a man full of Faith and of the Holy Ghost.—Acts vi. 5.

Stephen, full of Grace and Power.—Acts vi. 8.

STEPHEN, the proto-martyr of the Christian Church, as his portrait is limned in the Holy Scriptures, stands out before our eyes as one of the most beautiful characters in human history. He is to the New Testament, what Joseph was to the Old, almost faultless as a spiritual hero, a true man of God. He is pictured as a man of supreme faith, which issued in remarkable decision and strength of character; and in divine wisdom which lifted him above others in spiritual insight and intelligence.

His name is full of meaning, is Greek in its origin, and signifies Crown. It is a singular coincidence that he was the first to receive the crown of martyrdom, amongst all the followers of the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the first deacon in the line of service to *diaconize*, 'the Archdeacon', as the Greek Church loves to call him. He is the first martyr mentioned in Scripture, the leader of 'the noble army of martyrs', the first witness to Christ to seal his testimony with his blood. And his martyrdom was of the highest kind, for it was both in will and deed.

The character of Stephen is worthy of the most careful and prayerful study.

Its blessed secret was Faith.

He is described as a man 'full of faith'. It was faith in the highest degree. While others showed timidity and were in danger of wavering, he stood firm as a rock against every withering blast of error and storm of unbelief. His supreme trust was in Christ, in whom he confided with all his heart, and to whom he clung as the only One who could help and save. He was a man of faith, in whom that marvellous faculty, which is the eye of the soul, was fully developed, by which he saw,

strange paradox as it may appear, the Invisible, just as some animals, as Robertson points out, have the strange power of seeing in the dark.

The motive power of Stephen's life was the Holy Spirit. He was not only ' full of faith ', but of the Holy Ghost as well. And rich in privilege as the life of faith is, this is a higher step in Christian attainment. For while faith is the hand of the soul clasping God, or the eye of the soul looking unto Jesus; to be ' full of the Holy Ghost ' is to enjoy the actual presence of God in the heart. Faith is a great gift of the Holy Spirit, but to be ' full of the Holy Ghost ' is to possess the fullness of His spiritual gifts.

It is no wonder, then, that Stephen is described as being full of grace, as reflecting in his life the life of Christ in all its singular charm of gentleness and strength. And with grace, he had power, a strong word in the Greek, which we have carried into English, in a term which deals with the science of forces, ' dynamics,' and in the expression ' dynamite ', a material which possesses such great explosive force.

It should be noted, too, that all the deacons were endued with wisdom. This was a necessary qualification on the part of men who were called to the conduct of affairs. Their chief duties were administrative. We usually think of Stephen as a beautiful and lofty character, standing on a pedestal above others in true nobility of life, in a spirit of detachment from mundane affairs. But we do well to remember, that he was specially selected on account of his discretion, because of his aptitude for practical business and his capacity for work.

Stephen, as the record of his trial shows, was possessed of marvellous intellectual powers, coupled with wonder-

ful facility of expression and utterance. His eloquence, when he stood before his judges, was irresistible. They 'were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake'. His adversaries could not understand it, but Stephen, like Micah, might have said, 'Truly I am full of power by the Spirit of the Lord,' as his burning thoughts followed one the other, 'in fit words and heavenly eloquence.'

Stephen stood the supreme test that can be applied to any life. 'He was faithful unto death.'

We may not feel with Bishop Woodford, that 'If he had failed in the trial, humanly speaking, Christianity would have failed.' We cannot tell whether Stephen realized, that for a brief hour the world's destinies had rested with him. But of this we are sure, that a great crisis had come, that as :

> Once to every man and nation comes the moment to decide,
> In the strife of Truth with Falsehood, for the good or evil side,

so it came to Stephen and to the Christians associated with him.

He stood for Christ. He bore his witness manfully and well. He was faithful to the teaching of the Lord Jesus. When the members of the Sanhedrin shut their ears to his speech, and in their mad fury turned upon him to do him violence, he lifted his eyes to Christ in heaven. And a bright and blessed vision was vouchsafed to him; he saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of power, as if watching with eager interest His servant, and ready to help and save and receive His faithful follower. They rushed upon him with stones in their hands, uttering frantic yells of rage, 'with

curses loud and deep,' and they beat out his sweet young life in the dust, but even their fierce hatred could not destroy in his heart the fruit of the Spirit, which is love. And above the shouts of the infuriated mob, and the pelting hail of the stones, and their cruel thud as they fell on their victim, there arose to heaven a plea for God's mercy on his murderers, a cry for their pardon, a prayer that their awful sin might not be laid to their charge.

Professor Hort sees in Stephen the believer united to Christ the Life, and so he says he ' died with words of faith and forgiveness on his lips which disclose the calm and sane energy of his heart '.

It is thus that faith triumphs, that love comes forth victorious, and grace attains its perfect work. As his judges looked at Stephen, though they should have looked higher, they find that Stephen is looking up to God, and lo, his face is as the face of an angel. It is the benediction of the Father, it is the reflection of the face of Christ, it is the transforming power of the Spirit of God. Is it but a pious opinion that sees, in the light of the glorified face of the martyr, the reflection of the rays of the Crown of Life ?

ST. JOHN THE EVANGELIST'S DAY

December 27

The Collect

Merciful Lord, we beseech thee to cast thy bright beams of light upon thy Church, that it being enlightened by the doctrine of thy blessed Apostle and Evangelist Saint John may so walk in the light of thy truth, that it may at length attain to the light of everlasting life ; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Happy soul, above the rest,
Leaning on thy Saviour's breast!
Thou the dear disciple art,
Ever closest to His heart;
Thou dost all His secrets know,
Choicest of His friends below,
Called peculiarly to prove
Christ is God, and God is Love.

CHARLES WESLEY.

For life, with all it yields of joy and woe,
And hope and fear—believe the aged friend—
Is just our chance o' the prize of learning love,
How love might be, hath been indeed, and is.

BROWNING, *A Death in the Desert.*

The Disciple whom Jesus loved.—St. John xxi. 20.

THE character of St. John, the Apostle of the Lord, is one of the most beautiful the world has ever seen. The reason lies on the surface: he, more than any of the apostles, was most like the Lord Jesus, whom Tennyson once described as a union of man and woman, sweetness and strength. And St. John drank more fully, too, of the spirit of the Christ.

It has been well pointed out by the scholarly Lange, that while Peter was the first of the apostles in their relation to the world, John was the first in their relation to Christ. And the brilliant Grotius long ago remarked with great spiritual insight that Peter was more a friend of Christ (Christophilos), John a friend of Jesus (Jesuphilos), his bosom friend. Indeed, long centuries before, the golden-mouthed Chrysostom had noted the difference between the two men, and the two minds, and contrasting St. John with St. Peter, said, that he was loftier, that he saw more deeply, that he pierced right into and through

spiritual truths, was more the lover of Jesus than of Christ, as Peter was more the lover of Christ than of Jesus.

St. John was the theologian of the apostolic band. He was also the philosopher of the Church. His chief study was God, and he sought constantly for first principles, and fundamental truths. His chief concern was the spiritual, but he ever endeavoured to place it in right relations with the life of humanity. There was a singular appropriateness in the title which was given to him in the primitive Church, ' John the Divine.'

The symbol of St. John is the Eagle. But no bird of prey, though king of the species, however keen of sight and swift of wing, could ever truly symbolize the Apostle of Love. The oak is a natural symbol of strength, the sword of slaughter, and the only symbol that could possibly typify St. John is an angel. We take Scott's great line, and apply it in a different sense, 'A ministering angel thou.' He not only dwelt in the truth, and lived the truth, but he carried it also to men. In more senses than one, there was a man sent from God, ' whose name was John.'

The first glimpse of St. John in Scripture shows him as a disciple of the Baptist. He was one of the two disciples who followed Jesus when the Baptist proclaimed Him as the ' Lamb of God '. Thus love was born for Jesus, and like his Master, ' having loved, he loved unto the end.'

St. John's nature, when he first came to Christ, was fiery and impetuous to a degree. He, with his brother James, won from the Lord the title of Boanerges, sons of Thunder, because of the lightning-like vehemency of character which they displayed. The words of Christ were not only descriptive, but prophetic as well. They

marked out the men, who in their fierce zeal would call down fire from heaven to destroy the Samaritans. But these men, naturally so full of fire and impetuosity, were under grace to become men, whose lives like lightning would reveal character, and their voices as with thunder-tones arouse the sleeping and awaken the dead. John, however, son of Thunder, awe-inspiring and threatening, must sit long at the feet of Christ, before he can become John, the apostle of Christian love.

John is a type of those great souls who bring forth fruit in old age:

> For him in vain the envious seasons roll
> Who bears eternal summer in his soul.

He developed late. He completely traverses the modern opinion, which has gained currency in some quarters, that a man is too old for good work at forty, and always useless at sixty. He was old, as men count age, when, under Divine inspiration, he gave to the Church the Revelation, the marvellous Apocalypse of God. And he had passed the allotted span of life before he wrote the fourth Gospel, 'the Gospel of the Incarnate Word.' And whether ninety summers had kissed his brow, or as some think one hundred and twenty winters had left their frost upon his head:

> Of no distemper, of no blast he died,
> But fell like Autumn fruit that mellowed long,

fruit borne for the great Husbandman, and gathered into the heavenly garner. It was his rich privilege to outlive all the apostles, and to lay the great key-stone in the temple of truth, which we know as the Word of God. James, his fiery brother, had been martyred with the

sword; Peter, the intrepid leader, had met the death of the cross; Paul had carried the gospel to the Gentiles, had enlarged the vision of the church, and had at Rome itself sealed his testimony with his blood; but John lived on to complete the gospel witness of God's grace, the story of immortal love.

John is the apostle of meditation, the man of spiritual insight, the idealist who had the richest visions of God, and the reign of Christ in His everlasting kingdom. Meditation is said to be almost a lost art in our day. Robert Hall thought that it was essential to the revival and preservation of personal religion. Indeed all great souls acknowledge what an influence it has in the promotion of spirituality. We may not at once perceive the effect of meditation upon our hearts; it is, as Newman points out, so like 'the unfolding of the leaves in spring': but we eventually know it by our growth in the divine life.

St. John has given us our richest views of God. What description can equal his wonderful words, 'God is love'? All the other attributes arise from this great principle. The God of the Christian revelation is a God of Love, One who fills the heart, and inhabits the soul. What definition can touch, much less surpass, 'God is a Spirit'? It lifts the mind at once to the unseen and heavenly realities, and ennobles all our thought of the Supreme Being. And then the sublime conception, 'God is Light,' follows in natural order. He is the Father, the source and secret of all light, light that enters man's inmost being, illumining his 'first springs of thought and will', and light that sheds its radiance upon the pathway of his life.

There are many legends of St. John, and some are, no doubt, apocryphal in their origin. But one at

least so reflects his spirit, that it ought to be true. It is said that the Apostle tarried at Ephesus until extreme old age overtook him, and he had to be carried to the church services by his disciples. All that he could say by way of exposition or exhortation, was this saying, 'Little children, love one another.' No words are wiser, truer, or more needful, and yet the Christians assembled grew weary of their repetition, and in their impatience said, 'Master, why dost thou always say this?' The reply of St. John is well worth remembering, 'It is the Lord's command, and if only this be done, it is enough.'

The Christian in faith, is able to take the words of Christina Rossetti, and make them his own:

Yet shall I envy blessed John?
Nay, not so verily,
Now that Thou, Lord, both Man and God,
Dost dwell in me:
Upbuilding with Thy Manhood's might
My frail humanity;
Yea, Thy Divinehood pouring forth,
In fullness filling me.

THE INNOCENTS' DAY

December 28

The Collect

O Almighty God, who out of the mouths of babes and sucklings hast ordained strength, and madest infants to glorify thee by their deaths; Mortify and kill all vices in us, and so strengthen us by thy grace, that by the innocency of our lives, and constancy of our faith even unto death, we may glorify thy holy name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Sweet infancy,
O fire of heaven! O sacred light!
How fair and bright,
How great am I
Whom all the world doth magnify.

THOMAS TRAHERNE.

When they tread the heavenly ground,
With the innocents at play:
With their martyr palm-boughs playing,
And their crowns, their voices rise—
'For our playground,' they are saying,
'God has given us all the skies!'

THE day of the Holy Innocents is one which appeals with peculiar force to the heart. They were martyrs, the earliest who suffered for Christ, but martyrs only in deed, not in will.

The three days which so closely follow each other in the Church's Year are rich in teaching; the story of the Proto-Martyr of the Church, the life history of the Apostle of love, and the picture of perfect innocence suffering for truth.

The slaughter of the infant children of Bethlehem by the cruel monster, King Herod, strangely fulfilled the prophecy of Jeremiah, which that great prophet, who touched such depths of human sorrow, has depicted in words of exquisite beauty and pathos:

A voice was heard in Ramah,
Weeping and great mourning,
Rachel weeping for her children
And she would not be comforted
Because they are not.

There is the story, too, of the bitter weeping of the exiles in Rama who in anguish of heart lifted their voices

in lamentation over the pitiless slaughter of their weaker brethren, who encumbered the march on their way to Babylon.

And now again in Rama is there bitter sorrow of heart, and heart-breaking lamentation, as torn from their mothers' breasts the little ones suffer death by extreme violence. But there is a contrast, for the banished ones are not Israelites but Israel's Hope, 'the Holy One of Israel.'

God is able to bring good out of evil. The dark and unholy deed of Herod fixed beyond dispute the fact of the Saviour's birth at Bethlehem. The voice of the prophet had proclaimed the birthplace of the Christ, it was written in the Book of God, and now Herod's sword, mightier than any pen, placed the historic fact beyond question. The awful event made it possible also for the infant child Jesus to live in obscurity during His early years, free from the designs of sinful men, and with opportunity for preparation for His great life-work.

The Innocents themselves were safe with God, and entered into the fullness of Christ's salvation. While it is true that the higher life is that of victory won, and that virtue which knows the fierce fire of temptation is nobler in character than untried innocence, yet who does not feel that when little children die, they are 'saved from the evil to come', and that their happiness is complete:

> Thy gracious Word
> Was as a pledge of benediction, stored
> For Christian mothers, while they moan
> Their treasured hopes, just born, baptized, and gone.
> Oh, joy for Rachel's broken heart!
> She and her babes shall meet no more to part.

This is the true source of all comfort when dear ones are taken, and the clinging tendrils of the heart, which were so entwined around the child God had lent us for a time, are broken. The infants of Bethlehem were closely related to the life of the Christ. And in this we have the whole secret of blessing. Faith, then, teaches us to say:

She is not dead—the child of our affection,
But gone unto that school
Where she no longer needs our poor protection,
And Christ himself doth rule.

THE CIRCUMCISION OF CHRIST

JANUARY 1

The Collect

ALMIGHTY GOD, who madest thy blessed Son to be circumcised, and obedient to the law for man; Grant us the true Circumcision of the Spirit; that, our hearts, and all our members, being mortified from all worldly and carnal lusts, we may in all things obey thy blessed will; through the same thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

For love of us His woes begin;
The Sinless suffers for our sin;
The Law's great Maker for our aid
Obedient to the Law is made.—BESNAULT.

THIS day, like so many in the Christian Calendar, celebrates an historical event. The Scripture narrative is simplicity itself. 'And when eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the child, his name was called Jesus.'

The ancient rite of Circumcision was established by

God as a witness to His people, throughout all their generations, of the deadly work of sin in human life. It was deeply symbolical. It pointed to the corruption of man's life from the first, and witnessed to the transmission of the hereditary taint from parent to child. The very act of wounding the body was a mark of God's displeasure with sin, and signified the putting away of 'the filth of the flesh'.

Circumcision, however, was not merely negative. On its positive side it was the sign of a covenant with God, and denoted the separating of the life from nature's defilement to a state of consecration to the service of God. It was an initiatory rite, a step forward into a new condition, an introduction into the covenant life of God, with all its attending privileges, and it was fitting that it should be accompanied with the sign of distinctive personality, the giving of the child's proper name.

The rite of Circumcision was to the Old Testament Church what the Sacrament of Baptism is to the New, although the Sacrament of grace is necessarily richer in meaning and content, than the rite of the law. The former was at least anticipatory, typical, preparatory, and served as a foundation upon which the latter might be built. The contrast is, however, suggestive—one the stern cutting of the flesh, the other the outward cleansing of water, marking as they do the difference between the terrors of the law and the loving spirit of the gospel of grace.

There was no absolute need that Jesus should submit to the rite, for He was entirely free from the deadly taint of imperfection and sin, for which it stood. He was 'holy, harmless, undefiled', 'without spot of sin, to make us clean from all sin.' But He was obedient to

the law, and fulfilled all righteousness. It was thus throughout the whole of His earthly life, He observed with scrupulous exactness the Sabbath, He went up to the feasts, He kept the Passover. He early suffered for our sakes, the shadow of the Cross was even upon His infant years. He endured the pain and thus taught the spiritual meaning of circumcision, the circumcision of the heart and of all our members.

The life of Jesus foreshadowed and pictured at every point the life of the Christian. For the Christian life originates in a spiritual birth, enjoys a spiritual circumcision not made with hands, enters into its holy baptism, meets its days of temptation, fulfils its ministry, passes through its passion, meets its cross, and issues in its joyous resurrection.

The poet Whytehead, in singularly felicitous phrase, has described the meaning of the Circumcision of Christ, in its relation to the Christian life:

O wherefore bring ye here this holy Child?
  Such rite befits the sinful, not the clean;
Why should this tender Infant undefiled
  Be thus espoused in blood, while we have been
So gently into covenant beguiled?
  No keen-edged knife our bleeding foreheads scored
  With the sharp cross of our betrothed Lord:
But we belike in quiet wonder smiled,
  While on our brow the priest, with finger cold,
Traced with the hallowed drops the saving sign;
  Whilst Thou unsparing of Thy tears, the old
And sterner ritual on Thyself didst take:
Meet opening for a life like Thine,
Changing the blood to water for our sake.

THE EPIPHANY

Or the Manifestation of Christ to the Gentiles

The Collect

O God, who by the leading of a star didst manifest thy only-begotten Son to the Gentiles; Mercifully grant, that we, which know thee now by faith, may after this life have the fruition of thy glorious Godhead; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Sages leave your contemplations,
Brighter visions beam afar;
Seek the great desire of nations;
Ye have seen his natal star.
Come and worship,
Worship Christ, the new-born King.

James Montgomery.

Thou art the world's true Morning Star!
Not that which, on the edge of night—
Faint herald of a little orb,
Shines with a dim and narrow light;
Far brighter than our earthly sun,
Thyself at once the Light and Day!
The inmost chambers of the heart
Illumining with heavenly ray.—Hilary of Arles.

THE word 'Epiphany' comes to us from the Greek, and means 'appearance', or becoming manifest. Its use in the Christian Church is clearly indicated in the title of the Collect for the Day:—The Epiphany, or the manifestation of Christ to the Gentiles. The special reference is to the visit of the Magi to Bethlehem, at the birth of Jesus Christ, the Redeemer of the world:

There swathed in humblest poverty,
On chastity's meek lap enshrined.

The first manifestation was to God's chosen people, the Jews, the Shepherds of Bethlehem's plains representing most fitly their race. The second was to the Gentile world, through the Magi, or wise men, who followed the leading of a star until they found the Christ:

> A light that naught on earth can mar,
> A light that shineth from afar;
> A beautiful attracting star.

We may wonder at the means used to lead the representatives of the Gentile world to Jesus. It is, perhaps, sufficient for us to know that the star served as a finger of God to guide them to the very place of their quest.

The expectation of the coming of a world's deliverer was at that time general, as the Roman historians, Suetonius and Tacitus bear witness. The Jews were scattered almost everywhere, and they carried their national hope with them. The wise men may possibly have heard of the promised Messiah through the dispersal of Israel, or the knowledge may have come to them through the prophecies, some of which, like Daniel's great predictions, were uttered in the Gentile world.

God led them at first by the works of nature, a star, a luminous body, under special laws to fulfil a Divine purpose. Then God led them, when they reached Jerusalem, by the Divine Word, for it was from the prophecies that the Sanhedrin, in answer to Herod's question, gave the answer that Bethlehem was the predicted birthplace of the Christ. Thus was honour put upon God's word.

The visit of the Wise Men to Bethlehem satisfied all their expectations. They found the Christ-Child. The heart-hunger of the world there met its full satisfaction,

for in Bethlehem—the house of bread—they found the Living Bread. Their joy knew no bounds. They bowed in adoring love. They presented out of their rich store most costly gifts, gold, frankincense, and myrrh. The imagination of the devout sees in these gifts, gold for the infant King in token of His true royalty, frankincense as a mark of His divinity, and myrrh as prophetic of His sufferings:

> Sacred gifts of mystic meaning:
> Incense doth their God disclose;
> Gold the King of kings proclaimeth,
> Myrrh His sepulchre foreshows.

All this may be but the fruit of our imagination, but it seems at least clear that the gifts were in reality 'offerings' bearing a religious significance, as the word is so used in Scripture, at least seven times in the New Testament, of an offering to God.

The Epiphany shows that God's great plan of salvation is upon the largest lines. All national barriers are broken down. All social prejudices are set aside. Jesus is shown to be the Saviour of Gentile as well as Jew. The lesson is plainly taught that those who live up to the light that they possess, are led still further by the hand of God. They saw the star, they followed its leading, they reached the true Light of the World. They saw:

> O wondrous sight,
> Of lights the very Light,
> Who holdest in Thy hand
> The sky and sea and land,—
> Who than the glorious heavens art more exceeding bright.

In the Greek Church, the Epiphany is called the 'Day of Lights'. In modern times, the saintly Muhlenburg

seized the idea which lay at the root of the visit of the Magi, and celebrated Epiphany with an offering of silver and gold, for the work of Christ in the Mission field.

The great Gift of God at Christmas leads naturally to the duty of the Epiphany. The shepherds made known all that they had seen and heard, and the Magi carried the glad tidings to their own country. In the Church of England, the season is one of joy, and the thought of service has been made the prominent feature. How fitting it is, that in the Church of England in Canada, it should be made the time for special offerings for Foreign Missions, the two thoughts being combined :—that of the offering of self for service, and that of our means for the spread of the kingdom.

The First Sunday in Epiphany teaches the Lesson of Christ's Perfect Obedience. The Second Sunday brings into view Christ's Power as Creator, in His first miracle. The Third Sunday furnishes the picture of the Divine Healer, the Good Physician. The Fourth Sunday shows Christ as the Ruler and Governor : (1) of His Church ; (2) of Nature—wind and wave, and the dumb creation. The Fifth Sunday points forward, as does the Sixth as well, to the final Epiphany—the Second Advent, the Presence of Christ with His people.

The Lessons of the Day throughout the Epiphany Season have a distinctively Missionary outlook. This is especially true of the Old Testament lessons taken from the predictions of Isaiah, the great evangelical prophet. They show Israel's place in the world, and sweep onward until salvation is carried unto the ends of the earth, and Christ Himself sees of the travail of His soul and is satisfied.

The leading idea, the central fact upon which every-

thing else depends, set forth in the Church's Year for the Season of Epiphany is that of the true Divinity of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ :

> Faith through the veil of flesh can see
> The Face of Thy Divinity,
> My Lord, My God, my Saviour.

The lessons of Epiphany are very precious, and very helpful. May we all be found amongst those ' Who follow Truth along her star-paved way '. It will surely be so, if in faith we look up and offer our heartfelt prayer to God :

> O guide us by Thy Light, that we
> The way may find, and still to Thee
> Our hearts, our all, for tribute bring.

SEPTUAGESIMA TO LENT

> Go not, with hat and staff, to wander
> Beside God's grave and cradle yonder ;
> Look inward, and behold with awe,
> His Bethlehem and Golgotha.—RÜCKERT.

THE Christian's mind is now set towards Easter. We follow Christ in His great Fast of Forty Days, in His Temptation, to Calvary, to the Tomb, and beyond to the Resurrection Day.

Septuagesima is the first Sunday that points towards Easter. It occurs nine weeks, or about seventy days, before that great festival, hence its name, Septuagesima or the seventieth.

The design of the Church Year has already led us to study the First Coming of Christ, and to look forward to His return in glory. We have also stood in thought at

His manger-bed, and watched His infant years. The great purpose of His coming has been brought clearly before our minds. Now we are called to look within and to discover in ourselves, in the light of the Holy Spirit's teaching, the reason of the Saviour's sufferings, and the purpose of His redeeming work.

The leading idea of Septuagesima Sunday, as shown in Collect, Epistle, Gospel, and in Scripture lesson, is the story of the Creation of the world, of man, and of God's gracious provision for our first parents. The first lessons, taken from Genesis i. and ii., give a marvellous word-picture of the origin of the world, and of life in all God's creatures, leading up to man. Man's life of privilege is also shown in the paradise which God prepared for him.

The Collect is a prayer for deliverance from most just judgement. Its confession of sin is almost in the words of Scripture, for, as Nehemiah says, 'Thou art just in all that is brought upon us; for Thou hast done right, but we have done wickedly.' The Epistle is St. Paul's famous call to a life of self-denial (1 Cor. ix. 24). The Gospel is the parable of the labourers in the vineyard (St. Matt. xx. 1). The eleventh hour labourer called to the work of the vineyard receives a full day's wage. Marvellous picture of the grace of God, who gives to him that comes at the last moment the same blessed forgiveness as to the man who came in the freshness of his youthful love. Wondrous grace, indeed, for both owe all to Christ, the Christian who has laboured all the day long, as well as the man who entered the service at the 'eleventh hour'.

Sexagesima is, roughly speaking, sixty days before Easter, as its name denotes. The Collect for the Day is an acknowledgement that we dare not put our trust

in any one save in Christ. God Himself sees us, and reads us through and through, and we come to Him in prayer, putting aside all earthly trust, in ourselves, or in our works. And we ask God to be our helper and strong deliverer, ' that by His power we may be defended against all adversity.'

The Epistle is St. Paul's word-picture of the trials of his life (2 Cor. xi. 19). He had many infirmities, and was beset with weaknesses on every side, but Christ was His strength. The Gospel is the parable of the sower, in which is described the sowing of the Gospel seed, and the results which followed (Luke viii. 4).

The Lessons tell the story of the Fall of Man, the entrance of sin into our world, and the ruin wrought by it, culminating in the flood.

The Church teaching of Sexagesima takes us back to first principles. We listen to the story of man's fall, the influence and effects of sin, and the ruin brought about by the tempter. But in the midst of it all there shines out the first evangel of God, the promise that the woman's conquering seed shall yet bruise the serpent's head.

Quinquagesima is fifty days before Easter, as its name indicates.

The Collect, which is one of the most beautiful prayers ever framed in human speech, is a fruit of the ' bright and blissful ' Reformation.

The Epistle is St. Paul's glorious eulogy of love, the sweetest lyric in all language (1 Cor. xiii. 1). It teaches us true Charity, which is the love of Christ shed abroad in the heart, influencing our every action. As Bishop Davenant says, it is ' A virtue divinely infused by which we love God for His own sake, and our neighbour for God's sake.'

The Gospel (Luke xviii. 31) is a clear prediction from Christ's lips of His approaching sufferings and death, with which is combined the story of the infinite compassion of Christ to the blind man, who sat by the wayside begging, and received from the Great Physician, in answer to the prayer of faith, the blessing that he sought, the light of heaven pouring in through the windows of his soul, and flooding his inmost being with its soft radiance.

The Old Testament Lessons take us a step further in the history of redemption (Gen. ix. to ver. 20), giving the covenant of the bow in the cloud ; and (Gen. xii. or xiii.) the story of Abraham, with its supreme lesson of faith.

We have been led in the three Sundays before Lent to see the meaning of sin, its guilt and power ; we have been taught to look to God alone for deliverance, to Christ our only Saviour, and now we discover the blessed secret of it all : Faith that works by Love.

THE SACRED SEASON OF LENT

There is no grief that ever wasted man,
But finds its Hour here in thine awful Week.—KEBLE.

What then ? What rests ?
Try what repentance can ! What can it not ?
SHAKESPEARE.

Prostrate your soul in penitential prayer !
Humble your heart beneath the mighty hand
Of God, whose gracious guidance oft shall lead
Through sin and crime the changed and melted heart,
To sweet repentance and the sense of Him.—CLOUGH.

'Tis true we cannot reach Christ's fortieth day,
Yet to go part of that religious way
Is better than no deed.

Neither ought other men's abuse of Lent,
Spoil the good use, lest by that argument
We forfeit all our creed.—HERBERT.

THE return of the Season of Lent with its golden privileges, rich opportunities, and holy duties, is a special call to us to remember amidst all the pressure of the world's life, God's claim upon us to live for Him and to walk with Him. The world is ever near, the flesh is weak, and in a strenuous age of hurry and incessant work, when leisure is so often given to amusement, athleticism, or light and desultory reading, there is great need of a special religious season to remind us of what true life really is, and to move us to seek it where alone it can be found, in Christ, and to use the aids which God has given us for its sustenance and development.

There is an increasing feeling on the part of all thoughtful Christians that the spiritual life requires seasons set apart especially for meditation, for definite heart-searching, for united prayer, for more systematic Bible study and for a larger use of the Means of Grace. It is generally acknowledged that God's blessing has been vouchsafed in large measure to those who have thus sought in Christ the deepening and enriching of spiritual life. And not a few have been led from indifference, and worldliness, and sin, to the Lord Jesus Christ for pardon, peace, and service.

In this matter we are not left to human caprice by our beloved Church. The season of Lent affords just the opportunity which is required for special services and is a clear call to the whole Church to Self-examination concerning open and secret sins, 'Repentance toward God,' 'Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ,' and a life of self-

denying and self-sacrificing service always 'abounding in the work of the Lord'.

The supreme purpose of Lent is to lead Christians to a life of entire consecration to God, of ourselves, our souls and bodies, 'a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God,' which St. Paul declares is our reasonable service. The Scripture call is clear, concise, and definite. 'Be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.'

The spirit of Lent is not necessarily gloomy and sad. There is in high resolve, and deep self-denial, something of the feeling of stern and holy joy. While it deals with the life of the individual, it is the opposite to that view which allows life to be self-centred even in the search for spiritual good. The Christian is, as the current phrase runs, 'saved to serve.' Like his Divine Master, he is to go about doing good. There is at our door a large field for Christian enterprise, for thousands around us care but little for the things of God. Many have no thought of a Saviour's love or of the value of their souls, and are living in open sin. Let each Christian man and woman in all our congregations make an earnest effort during Lent to seek out some careless one and to lead at least one soul to Christ. Let no man or woman with whom you have to do cry at the last with the heart-break of despair, 'No man cared for my soul.'

The main intention of Lent is that it should be a School of Christ, in which we sit as disciples at the feet of the Master who is the Truth. It is forty days of spiritual training in the things of Christ, as a preparation for higher and better service in His Name.

It is true that we should always live near to Christ,

and walk with Him, and follow Him in true discipleship. Still it is well in a busy age to have special seasons for meditation, self-examination, and spiritual refreshment. Just as the Lord's Day, one day in the long seven, is a time marked out for rest and worship and most helpful in Christian progress, as Christmas brings before us the special lesson of the Incarnation, Good Friday the Passion, and Easter the Resurrection ; so Lent has its place as a special season in which the soul can make more earnest and frequent use of the means of grace.

It comes with its call to the careless and indifferent, to the pleasure seeker, to those absorbed in this world's affairs, to those who are actively engaged in their several occupations ; to remember the true meaning of life, to look up and beyond the brief day of our earthly existence, to face the realities of Life, Death, Eternity, Heaven, and Hell.

It comes with its gracious invitation to a life of deeper and fuller consecration, to those who have tasted that the Lord is gracious, but who seem to rest satisfied with a low ideal of Christian attainment.

It comes to all Christians who long for fuller communion with God, and greater power for service, with its golden opportunities for prayer, meditation and Bible study which, when rightly used, are splendid aids in spiritual development and growth in the Divine life.

The Christian is called not only to a state of salvation, but to a life of holiness, as Andrew Murray says : ' Salvation in holiness.' We are to rejoice in the truth, ' Christ for us our atonement,' and to go on to the blessed realization of ' Christ in us the hope of glory '. Not only safe in Christ, but holy in Christ, is to be our goal. Well may

we pray in the words of the devout and deeply mystical Lavater, whose cry was, 'I would Thy living image be':

O Jesus Christ grow Thou in me,
And all things else recede!
My heart be daily nearer Thee,
From sin be daily freed.

The Lenten season affords peculiar opportunities to the Christian for the deepening of the spiritual life. He is reminded of the dangers to which that life is exposed, especially of formalism with its blighting effects, and of emotionalism which allows the higher feelings to evaporate in thought and word leading to barrenness of soul.

Christ Himself has taught us the value of retirement for meditation, devout study and communion with God. 'Come ye yourselves apart and rest awhile.' The Old Testament saints walked with God in spiritual communion. They sought opportunities to be alone with God. The Lenten call is to walk with Christ daily, so that its forty days may be like forty steps of wonderful privilege in spiritual intercourse and heart converse with Him who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. The closer the walk with Christ, the deeper the spirit of penitence, the more earnest the faith, the richer will be the joy of Easter.

Lent should mean to us forty steps of progress in the Divine Life:

Less, less of self each day;
Less of the world and sin;
More of Thy Son, I pray,
More of Thyself within.

May the Forty days of Lent bring to us some special blessing, in the strength of which we may enter into a

larger and fuller Christian service, and may we spend its forty days in such a spirit of devotion to our Blessed Lord that we may be in the spirit to enter into the joy and peace of the glorious Festival of the Resurrection on the happy Easter Day.

THE FIRST DAY OF LENT

COMMONLY CALLED

ASH WEDNESDAY

The Collect

ALMIGHTY and everlasting God, who hatest nothing that thou hast made, and dost forgive the sins of all them that are penitent: Create and make in us new and contrite hearts, that we, worthily lamenting our sins and acknowledging our wretchedness, may obtain of thee the God of all mercy, perfect remission and forgiveness; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

The tears of penitents are the wine of angels.

Tears that sweeter far
Than the mad world's laughter are.

Man-like it is to fall into sin;
Fiend-like it is to dwell therein;
Saint-like it is for sin to grieve;
Christ-like it is all sin to leave.

ASH WEDNESDAY ushers in the solemn season, and gives colour to the whole of Lent. Its very name is significant, and points back to the days when there was a literal self-abasement to the very ground, in dust and ashes, by sorrowing penitents. Its spirit

was well expressed in that *Dies Irae* of the thirteenth century, by Thomas of Celano :

> Low I kneel with heart submission;
> See like ashes my contrition;
> Save, O save me from perdition.

The great, all-absorbing thought of the Day is Repentance. Its spirit is that of true Contrition for sin.

Repentance is one of the great words of the New Testament. It is used more than sixty times in the revelation of God's truth to us. In fifty-eight places in the original Greek, the word used is *metanoia*, composed of two words, *meta*, after, and *nous*, knowledge or thought. Its meaning is stamped on its face, and need never be misunderstood, an afterthought, or a change of mind.

The explanations of Scripture are the most illuminating of all. Indeed, Scripture explains itself to the Spirit-taught student of the Divine Word. In the Parable of the Two Sons, we have our blessed Lord's own interpretation of repentance (Matt. xxi. 28–32). One son said, it will be remembered, ' I will not ' : but afterwards he repented, and went. It is clear that what he did was to change his mind. His first thought was his own selfish one ; he gave that up, he changed his own selfish mind into harmony with his father's wish, and made his father's mind his own.

Repentance, as our Catechism so succinctly defines it, is the forsaking of sin. ' Repentance whereby they forsake sin.' It is godly sorrow, coupled with self-condemnation, and a complete turning away from sin. It is our true, and willing, and unconditional ' Yea ', instead of the old and selfish and sinful ' Nay ' to God's commands. It is well illustrated by the Prodigal, who

first came to himself, saw himself in his true light, then turned from himself to his father.

Luther learned its meaning in a rich, but most trying experience. There are two paintings which tell the story of his spiritual development. In one, he is the young monk, labouring to discover the way of salvation. He is pictured as standing before a chained Bible, with stooping figure, emaciated, worn with vigils, pale of face, and with eyes which tell of the fear which reigns within. He knows only the man-made way of penance, to be gained, he thinks, by painful effort and self-torturing endeavour. But Staupitz, the vicar-general, has been taught by the Holy Spirit, and he advises Luther: 'Instead of torturing yourself for your faults, cast yourself into the arms of your Redeemer.' 'True repentance begins in the love of God.' 'Love Him who first loved you.' In the second picture, Luther is painted standing erect, bold and fearless, serene of countenance, peaceful in expression. He has an unchained Bible in his hands. He has discovered, as he told Staupitz, that the word Repentance, which he once thought was the most terrible in the Bible, is really the most joyous. The passages in the Bible which speak of repentance and conversion, he declared, seem to run to him from all sides, to smile, to spring up, and to play around him.

The importance of right views of Repentance cannot be over-estimated. The difference between the true and the false affects the whole question of religion. It has been said that repentance and faith are the beginning of Christianity. They are amongst the first principles upon which all else depends. They have been compared with the two lobes of the heart, distinct and yet so united that they beat with one full pulse of spiritual life.

The Lord Jesus Christ declared that repentance is necessary to salvation. He said that it is the great subject of the praise and joy of the angels in heaven. St. Paul described his teaching as consisting of two great foundation truths and fundamental principles: 'Repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.'

GOOD FRIDAY

The Collects

ALMIGHTY GOD, we beseech thee graciously to behold this thy family, for which our Lord Jesus Christ was contented to be betrayed, and given up into the hands of wicked men, and to suffer death upon the cross, who now liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. *Amen.*

ALMIGHTY and everlasting God, by whose Spirit the whole body of the Church is governed and sanctified; Receive our supplications and prayers, which we offer before thee for all estates of men in thy holy Church, that every member of the same, in his vocation and ministry, may truly and godly serve thee; through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

O MERCIFUL GOD, who hast made all men, and hatest nothing that thou hast made, nor wouldest the death of a sinner, but rather that he should be converted and live; Have mercy upon all Jews, Turks, Infidels, and Hereticks, and take from them all ignorance, hardness of heart, and contempt of thy Word; and so fetch them home, blessed Lord, to thy flock, that they may be saved among the remnant of the true Israelites, and be made one fold under one shepherd, Jesus Christ our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Spirit, one God, world without end. *Amen.*

As a sacrifice
Glad to be offered, He attends the will
Of His great Father.—MILTON.

From pain to pain, from woe to woe,
With loving hearts and footsteps slow,
To Calvary with Christ we go . . .
Was ever grief like His ? Was ever sin like ours ?
FABER.

To the cross He nails thine enemies,
The Law that is against thee, and the sins
Of all mankind with Him there crucified—
Never to hurt them more, who rightly trust
In this His satisfaction.—MILTON.

Oh heart I made, a Heart beats here !
Face, My hands fashioned, see it in Myself !
Thou hast no power, nor mayst conceive of Mine,
But love I gave thee, with Myself to love,
And thou must love Me, who have died for thee.
BROWNING.

THE Friday before Easter has long been observed as the great day of commemoration of the Death of Christ, when ' by His one oblation of Himself once offered,' He made ' a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction, for the sins of the whole world.' The expressive term, ' Good Friday,' has gained almost universal acceptance from its use by the Anglican Communion, instead of the name formerly employed : the Day of the Cross, the Day of Salvation, the pascha of the Crucifixion.

The day has been observed from the earliest times with great solemnity by the Church of Christ. It is a solemn day, a day of solemn sadness on account of our sins, that crucified the Lord of Life, a day of solemn

gladness for the salvation which He brought to all mankind.

The great central truth of Christianity, that Christ died for our sins, is brought before the minds of men by every means the Church can use on Good Friday. It is as if with one voice the proclamation were made everywhere, in the very words of St. Paul: 'For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ and Him crucified.'

There were many truths of the Christian religion which must have appealed to the mind of St. Paul with peculiar force, for he was a philosopher as well as a theologian—a deep thinker in the region of metaphysical inquiry. There must have been a fascination to him in the discussion of such subjects as the being and attributes of God, His providential dealings with mankind, the origin and destiny of man and the high moral teaching of Christ.

And yet he declares that there is one subject of such pre-eminent importance that he has determined to shut all else out from his teaching in Corinth, and to know nothing but Christ and Him crucified.

And St. Paul who takes this position is one of the wisest of men. He is an opportunist, in a good, a Christian, sense. He is willing to become all things to all men, if by any means he may save some. He is a man of affairs, a trained speaker who desires to win his audience to his views without exciting their prejudices. He is tempted to gain a way for the reception of the gospel by the use of worldly policy, that is, by eliminating from his message that which was particularly distasteful to his hearers. And leaving out of account His crucifixion, Jesus Christ appealed with irresistible force to the men

of His time. For was He not a Jew of the Jews, connected with their royal house and embodying their national hopes and aspirations ; a zealous advocate of their law, and a teacher of their sacred Scriptures ? And as for the Gentile world, did He not rise above the narrow exclusiveness of His race ? Was He not an advocate of law and order, a loyal subject, rendering unto Caesar his due ? And as a teacher in the school of truth did He not throw light upon the problems of philosophic thought ?

We can well imagine the influence of the personality and of the teaching of Jesus Christ upon any unprejudiced mind brought in contact with either. Richard Watson Gilder has well explained it in his ' Song of a Heathen Sojourning in Galilee A.D. 32 ' :

> If Jesus Christ is a man—
> And only a man—I say
> That of all mankind I cleave to Him,
> And to Him will I cleave alway.

But what is St. Paul's settled policy as a preacher of the gospel ; what is the great theme of his discourse ? It is Jesus Christ and Him crucified. He brushes aside attractions of rhetoric, and makes no appeal upon questions in which there is mutual agreement, but deliberately speaks of the cross, the gallows of the day, with all its awful associations of shame and infamy and disgrace.

There is to his mind one central person, Jesus Christ ; one great fact, His crucifixion ; one all-important truth arising from His death, which is a sacrifice for the sin of the whole world. And although St. Paul concentrated his teaching in a ministry marked by singleness of aim, ' This one thing I do,' yet it must not be supposed that his course had a narrowing influence upon the mind.

For all life's richest blessings centre in the person of Christ, and its greatest gains may be traced to His cross.

There is first, then, the central figure, Jesus Christ. Our religion is not simply a philosophy, nor yet a system of teaching to be studied, accepted, and received, but a life. It brings to bear upon human thought and action not a body of new truth for consideration, but a person to be trusted and loved. This is its peculiar excellency, and the reason of its heart-moving power. It is the attracting force of love in a personal life lived on earth in the fierce light of duty, in the form of a servant stooping to the lowest and showing for all time to all men, in human form, the wideness of God's mercy and the greatness of His love.

There is, in the second place, the central fact which leads to the central truth—Christ crucified. St. Paul knew well the power of attraction which lies in the person of Christ. But one act stood out above all others as a revelation of His heart, and that was His death upon the Cross. This the Saviour Himself had pointed out long before when He had said : ' And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.'

The cross shows the way by which God is able to reconcile His justice with His mercy. A God all mercy were a God unjust. It is a bridge which passes from the one to the other. The sinner who looks in faith to Jesus Christ finds a way of access to the Father, and the free and full forgiveness of his sins.

The cross bears upon it the message of redeeming love, even as the Christian poet sings :

> Inscribed upon the cross we see,
> In shining letters, ' God is love.'

The outstretched arms of Jesus Christ tell the story

of God's attitude to men. He stretches out untiring hands of mercy and of love. It displays the whole redeeming powers of God brought into contact with human souls. There is nothing which speaks with such eloquent voice to the sinful, and proclaims so truly God's attitude towards sin and yet His love for the sinner.

The cross proclaims our redemption. It was there that Christ triumphed over Satan and his power. It was there that sin was nailed to the tree and condemned in the flesh. It was there that Death was met and vanquished, disarmed of its awful sting, and its power for ever destroyed. Truly the death of Christ was our redemption. It is not Christ without His cross, nor the cross without Christ, but both together, that gives life to dying men. It is this that makes Him irresistibly attractive:

> As I shall be uplifted on a cross
> In darkness of eclipse and anguish dread,
> So shall I lift up in my pierced hands
> Not unto dark, but light—not unto death,
> But life—beyond the reach of guilt and grief,
> The whole creation.

The cross declares the way of cleansing. The forgiveness of sin is as ever through the blood. And on the cross the true paschal lamb suffered and bore away the sins of the whole world. And so in trusting faith we bring our guilt to Jesus Christ, who alone can wash our

> Crimson stains
> White in His blood most precious,
> Till not a spot remains.

EASTER DAY

THE FESTIVAL OF THE RESURRECTION

The Collect

ALMIGHTY GOD, who through thine only begotten Son Jesus Christ hast overcome death, and opened unto us the gate of everlasting life; We humbly beseech thee, that, as by thy special grace preventing us thou dost put into our minds good desires, so by thy continual help we may bring the same to good effect; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. *Amen.*

Triumphant Queen of Days!

I say to all men far and near, that He is risen again;
That He is with us now and here, and ever shall remain.
And what I say, let each, this morn, go tell it to his friend,
That soon, in every place, shall dawn His kingdom without end.—NOVALIS. (G. F. P. VON HARDENBERG).

EASTER DAY is one of the greatest, if not, indeed, the greatest of all the Church's festivals. It is, as Professor Milligan ably says, the 'culminating point in the series of festivals which expressed the truly Christian and exquisitely beautiful idea of the Christian Year'. It is a weekly festival throughout the whole of Christendom. The institution of the Lord's Day rests upon the truth it enshrines, for one festival in the long year is not sufficient to keep in memory the glorious resurrection of Jesus Christ. Every Lord's Day is an Easter, but Easter is the day of days, and crowns the Sundays of the Christian year.

Christmas, the festival of the Incarnation, as the festival of the home life, holds in the western world,

especially in England and Germany, the largest place in the mind. But in the East, the cradle of Christianity, the festival of the Resurrection has always held the first place. The student of theology may claim that the Incarnation holds in its heart all else, every good and perfect gift of God, and displays at once God's mind towards us, and His holy will; he may believe that the doctrine of the Trinity is a greater mystery, but the ordinary Christian, as by an unerring instinct, recognizes that the Resurrection is the great foundation fact of Christianity, the truth upon which the fabric of our faith is reared. The thoughtful Christian sees also, at a glance, that the truths which cluster around Easter are the most helpful in consoling power, and yield the richest fruit in Christian life and experience.

Easter Day, the great Festival of the Resurrection, has been called the Queen of Festivals. In the East it is called 'The bright day'. The very name is significant of visions of light, or of rising, or of life.

We greet thee, happy day! We greet thee, day of hope undying, of joy which knows no shadow of a cloud, of faith, trustful and serene, of peace beyond the touch of earth's cold hand!

Welcome, day that saw Christ rise! Welcome, day that sealed death's doom! Welcome, day that witnessed the victory over the grave!

> Death is conquered, man is free,
> Christ has won the victory.

Let the joy bells ring in every believing heart, for Christ is risen. Let faith be strengthened as we stand beside the empty tomb. 'Why seek ye the living among the dead?' Let hope grow and increase at the thought

of everlasting life, as we remember the Saviour's words : ' Because I live, ye shall live also.'

We have stood in sad and earnest thought before Calvary's mount on Good Friday. There we have seen the awful cross, the cruel tree of torture upon which the Saviour hung for the world's sin. We have watched the burial, in the rock-hewn tomb, and have seen it sealed with the seal of imperial Rome, to violate which meant death. Good Friday was black with clouds. Heaven veiled its face from the sight of the world's sin, which required such a tremendous sacrifice as the Son of God. The seventh day, the Sabbath of the saints of old, broke sunless, for hope had died and was buried in the grave of Jesus.

But Easter Day breaks fair and beautiful, and its early dawn proclaims a Risen Lord, and shows an empty tomb. Earth's darkest spot, the tomb, is irradiated with a light from heaven. The abode of death is untenanted. A heavenly visitor attends to proclaim the triumph of life over death :

> Christ is risen, He is risen ;
> He hath left His rocky prison,
> And the White-robed Angels glimmer,
> 'Mid the cerements of His grave.

The attitude of the disciples between Good Friday and Easter was one of hopeless sorrow. They were cowed and beaten by the great calamity, which had robbed them of their Master and Friend. Hope was extinguished, not even a spark remained. The future was dark, without one ray of light.

They had failed to grasp the meaning of Christ's prophecies and promises concerning His resurrection. The proof of this is seen in the action of the holy women.

Look at Mary Magdalene, and the other women. Their hearts are bowed down with sorrow. They hasten to the tomb with tearful eyes, and spices in their hands. The spices proclaim louder than words that they have no hope that there is life in the body of Christ. Look too at the disciples. The little society which Jesus had built up with so much care was fast falling to pieces, the keystone was gone, and stone by stone the building was ready to fall into ruin.

But Easter Day saw the sun of hope light up the cheerless gloom. Easter morning brought a message which threw a flood of light upon all that had been dark before. They stood face to face with a great fact which nothing could gainsay, the tomb in which they had laid Jesus was empty. The tomb was in a rock, its door a great stone, sealed with the imperial seal, guarded by Roman soldiers, in the hands of the enemies of Christ. Yet it was empty. Here is God's answer to the sneers and taunts of unbelief before the cross. 'If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross . . . and we will believe thee.' Here is God's answer to every cavil of the sceptic from that day to this, it is the appeal to unanswerable fact—the empty tomb. Would they believe if He came down from the cross? Jesus did more. He yielded Himself to death, suffered Himself to be buried in the tomb, watched by enemies, kept by the mightiest power on earth, and from that grave He rose victorious, and came forth alive from the tomb.

Christianity appeals to a living Christ, not to a dead Saviour. In this it stands in remarkable contrast to the two great religions which share with it dominion over the hearts and consciences of men. Buddhism numbers for its adherents many millions of our race.

The great article of its creed is one which leads to dark and terrible despair. Its goal is Nirvana, which means a blowing out, as the lamp is blown out, utter annihilation. Its salvation is extinction of the thinking principle. We sigh for life, it offers death. The second great religion is Mohammedanism. Medina is a sacred city of the Moslems, consecrated by the tomb of Mohammed. There, in the mosque of the prophet, lies all that is mortal of Mohammed, its great founder. The western fable is that Mohammed's coffin is suspended by magnets and hangs between earth and heaven. Mohammed died in a hut and was buried where he died ; a mosque now covers it. But the pious Moslem prays towards his tomb in the mosque. He makes his intercessions to Mohammed, he prays to a dead man looking towards his tomb. How different it is with the Christian whose hope is in a living Christ, seated at the right hand of power, and who sees in the empty tomb the victory over death and the grave.

The effect of the empty tomb upon the disciples was immediate and lasting. It turned sorrow into joy, out of which was born peace. The risen Christ is the source of the new life of the believer and the secret of power.

The resurrection lessons are many and important. The resurrection furnishes a conclusive proof of the Divinity of Christ, greater indeed than if He had come down from the Cross. It is a clear proof of the saving efficacy of Christ's death. It is the stamp of God's approval and acceptance. It is the promise and pledge of the Christian's resurrection. 'Because I live ye shall live also.'

THE TEACHING OF THE FORTY DAYS, FROM EASTER TO ASCENSION

Forty days of Easter-tide
  Thou didst commune with Thine Own;
Now by glimpses, Lord, descried,
  Handled now and proved and known.

Risen Master, fain would we,
  Sharing those unearthly days,
Morn and eve, on shore and sea
  Watch Thy movements, mark Thy ways.

Catch by faith each glad surprise
  Of Thy footsteps drawing nigh,
Hear Thy sudden greeting rise—
  'Peace be to you! It is I';

Secrets of Thy kingdom learn
  Read the vision open spread
Feel Thy word within us burn,
  Know Thee in the broken bread.

JACKSON MASON.

THERE were many events of surpassing interest, and much teaching of the highest importance during those forty days which elapsed between the Resurrection of our blessed Lord from the grave, on the first glad Easter Day, and His glorious Ascension to the right hand of power in heaven.

The number of days is itself significant. The period of forty days or forty years in Scripture symbology is of frequent occurrence, and appears always to stand for a time of probation, before some great event in the history of the kingdom of God, or for a term of chastisement and humiliation. For instance, there were the forty days of rain at the flood. Moses spent forty years of prepara-

tion in Egypt, and forty in Midian ; he was forty days in the mount with God, and forty years in the wilderness of trial and preparation. For forty days and nights, Elijah travelled before he came under God's leading to Horeb, the mount of God. Nineveh was given a period of probation, a time for repentance of forty days. And in the earthly life of Jesus, our Divine Redeemer, we find frequently the same significant number. It was forty days after His birth that He was presented in the Temple, that ' all things according to the law of the Lord ' might be performed. And after His baptism, before He entered upon His active ministry, He was tempted forty days in the wilderness. There is here the third period of forty days, during which He abode on earth, and showed Himself ' alive after His passion by many infallible proofs, . . . and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.'

The gracious Epiphanies of the Forty Days are worthy of the most devout, coupled with the most profound, study. There are few indeed who realize their number, much less their significance. There was the first appearance to Mary Magdalene, whose eyes, brimming o'er with tears of penitence from the well-spring of love, were the first to look upon the risen Christ. There soon followed the second appearance to the holy women who had come early to the sepulchre, and were now given the message to the disciples to meet their risen Master in their native Galilee. There came next the epiphany to Peter, to whom the loving Saviour came, for the very purpose of dispelling his fears. Then there followed the gracious epiphany to the two disciples on the Emmaus road. And soon after to the Eleven, now reunited in the presence of a common hope, Thomas alone being

absent for some unexplained reason. Then eight days afterwards to the Eleven, Thomas being present, and demanding the most exact proofs of the resurrection body and life. Soon there followed the loving epiphany of dearest friendship to certain of the disciples on the shore of blue Galilee. And of supreme evidential value, there was the great epiphany to more than five hundred brethren, at once, in the mountains of Galilee, many of whom were living when St. Paul wrote his epistles to the Corinthians. Finally, He appeared to the disciples on the morning of His Ascension, and led them to Mount Olivet, where, in the presence of them all, ' He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight.'

The period of the Forty Days was of the greatest importance in the history of the kingdom of God. It was largely educational. It brought a sublime proof of His undying love, ' having loved them, He loved them unto the end.' The Apostles had failed in the hour of His trial, but He returns to them after His death with the same brotherly heart of compassion, watches over them with yearning pity, and in the old time spirit of tenderness provides for their need. The bitterness of grief is past, their sorrow has turned into joy, in the presence of His resurrection life. They have learned the lesson of the cross, of the burial, and of the glad new life of resurrection power. But there are deeper things still to come concerning the kingdom. The Ascension is before them, and Pentecost is still in the region of promise.

The Forty Days were days of waiting. They were to wait with patience and with expectation. They were formative days, when the lesson of implicit obedience to God was being taught. He commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait. They

must wait for God's time for action. They must wait for the fulfilment of the promise of the Spirit. They have been given the revelation of the love of the Father, they have seen the redemptive work of the Son, and near at hand is the pouring out of the Spirit by whose mighty power the love of God will be brought into human hearts, and the work of Christ made effective in human souls. The doctrine of the Holy Trinity stands revealed in the Forty Days.

There was the lesson during the Forty Days of the kingship of Christ, of His supreme authority in heaven and earth. They had seen Jesus of Nazareth in the dying throes of Good Friday, they had stood by His silent grave, they had looked upon the risen Christ of Easter, and now there comes to them the all-important truth that Jesus Christ has all power in heaven and earth. The Saviour whose name they are to proclaim is omnipotent, the child of Bethlehem is seen to be the 'Mighty God'.

And arising from the universal kingship of Christ, springs the lesson of the catholicity of the Church. The Gospel, is, according to Christ's own word, to be preached to the whole creation. His followers were told to 'go into all the world' and they were to make disciples of all nations.

The missionary lesson follows. For it was during the Forty Days that the great commission was given, the marching orders' of the Christian Church. The whole world was laid at the feet of His disciples, as the field of enterprise, in the great campaign for God and good.

There was another lesson of supreme importance, if in any sense they were to be equipped for their work, and that was the unceasing presence of Christ. They needed

the inspiration of the thought, ' Lo, I am with you alway,' for so great, so high, so holy a mission. The spiritual presence of Christ with His people is the very genius of Christianity. It was this that led St. Paul to declare, ' I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.' It is the blessed secret of all Christian life, Christ dwelling in the heart by faith.

The Forty Days confirmed their faith, shaken at the cross, revived after the resurrection, now made strong in the light of His presence with them from time to time, and the direct teaching of the risen Christ. Jesus gently led them step by step in the lesson-book of faith until they were prepared in heart and mind for the glory of the Ascension.

The Church teaching of the Forty Days is rich in truth concerning the risen life, first of Christ, then of the Christian believer.

The first Sunday after Easter inculcates the subject of purity. Christ our Passover has been sacrificed for us, and we are to keep the feast, free from the leaven of malice and wickedness. The Scripture lessons bring forward a chain of evidence concerning the resurrection as furnished by St. John and St. Paul. The Old Testament lessons (Num. xvi. and xvii. to ver. 12) furnish the solemn warning of the fate of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, whose rejection of God's appointed priesthood brought upon them such terrible punishment.

The Second Sunday after Easter sets Christ before us as our example, as He has also been our sacrifice. The Epistle furnishes St. Peter's beautiful picture of Christ's example on earth (1 Pet. ii. 19) ; while the Gospel is the word of Jesus recorded by St. John of the love and sacrifice of the Good Shepherd (St. John x. 11). The

Old Testament lessons (Num. xx. and xxi.) are full of warning against the spirit of murmuring, yet showing God's grace and power, as exemplified at Meribah, the water of strife, and in the plague of fiery serpents.

The Third Sunday after Easter is a call to Christian consistency, all that is contrary to the Christian profession being eschewed, and all such things as are agreeable to the same carefully followed. The Epistle (1 Pet. ii. 11) is St. Peter's injunction to live the pilgrim life, while the Gospel (St. John xvi. 16) points forward to the Ascension. The lessons are full of warning and exhortation. (Num. xxii., xxiii., or xxiv.)

The Fourth Sunday after Easter points to a heart fixed in God, filled with the spirit of loving obedience, and living in the light of promise. The Epistle (St. Jas. i. 17) tells the secret of every good gift of God, and the Gospel (St. John xvi. 5) shows us the expediency of Christ's departure from earth. The Old Testament lessons dwell upon the duty of obedience. (Deut. iv. and v.)

The Fifth Sunday after Easter brings out the need of inspiration in life, the spirit-born thought being followed by the spirit-assisted act. The Epistle is St. James's marvellous word-picture of the ritual of pure religion, which is the deed of loving service. (St. Jas. i. 22.) The Gospel is the word of Christ concerning prayer in faith, and the promise of the overcoming life. (St. John xvi. 23.) The Old Testament lessons furnish first the doctrine of the unity of God, and the necessity of obedience, coupled with warnings against the spirit of rebellion and self-will. (Deut. vi., ix., or x.)

The whole period is to be one of anticipation of the Ascension, and of expectation of the promised Comforter.

ASCENSIONTIDE AND ITS LESSONS

THE ASCENSION-DAY

The Collect

GRANT, we beseech thee, Almighty God, that like as we do believe thy only-begotten Son our Lord Jesus Christ to have ascended into the heavens; so we may also in heart and mind thither ascend, and with him continually dwell, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost, one God, world without end. *Amen.*

SUNDAY AFTER ASCENSION-DAY

The Collect

O GOD the King of glory, who hast exalted thine only Son Jesus Christ with great triumph unto thy kingdom in heaven; We beseech thee, leave us not comfortless; but send to us thine Holy Ghost to comfort us, and exalt us unto the same place whither our Saviour Christ is gone before, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost, one God, world without end. *Amen.*

I will arise, and in the strength of love
Pursue the bright track ere it fade away,
My Saviour's pathway to His home above.

Till resting by the incarnate Lord,
Once bleeding, now triumphant for my sake,
I mark Him, how by seraph hosts adored
He to earth's lowest cares is still awake.

KEBLE, *Christian Year.*

THE Ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ was the crowning act of His earthly ministry. It deserves, therefore, a large place in the Christian consciousness. Ascension Day commemorates a great fact in human history, as well as a commanding truth in theology.

The doctrine which arises from the fact is the most sublime and heart-lifting which can possibly occupy the mind of man. It is hardly too much to say that there is no truth more important, more inspiring, more helpful. It corrects almost all error in religious belief. If it had been properly understood, in all the Christian ages, it would, humanly speaking, have prevented all the divisions of Christendom.

The teaching which clusters around the great event is all-important. The Lord Jesus Christ, when He departed from this world, took the body, in which He had tabernacled on earth, to the right hand of power, thus uniting the divine and human, not for time alone, but for all eternity. It was expedient that He should thus go away, in order that He might send the Holy Spirit to abide with us for ever. Not only so, but in Heaven He ever liveth to make intercession for us. And in that holy, happy home, He is preparing a place for His people. Jesus not only lives, but He is at the right hand of power, to continue His blessed work, through His living Church, working on earth through the members of His mystical body, as they carry out the designs and desires of their great Head. He is our great Advocate on high, our unceasing Intercessor at God's right hand, our all-glorious King, who has all power in heaven and earth.

The beautiful teaching of our Church service is never more appropriate nor more apparent than on the great festivals of the Christian Year. Ascension Day is not now observed—in many English-speaking countries—as a public holiday, and vast numbers in consequence seldom if ever hear the inspiring and uplifting services of that great day in which is brought before us this last and crowning fact in our Lord's ministry on earth, and

His exaltation to Heaven where 'Glory shines about His head and a bright crown without a thorn'.

In the proper Psalms appointed for the day there are many expressions, which, though they had a lower and more general application when first written, are applicable in their ideal and spiritual sense to the humiliation and exaltation of the Son of Man. For example, in the Psalms for the morning service we find expressions such as these!—'What is man, that Thou are mindful of him: and the son of man, that Thou visitest him? Thou madest him lower than the angels to crown him with glory and worship.' 'Lord, who shall dwell in Thy tabernacle: or who shall rest upon Thy holy hill? Even he, that leadeth an uncorrupt life: and doeth the thing which is right, and speaketh the truth from his heart.' 'The king shall rejoice in Thy strength, O Lord.' 'Be Thou exalted, Lord, in Thine own strength.'

In the Psalms for the evening we have further expressions of triumph: 'Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord: or who shall rise up in His holy place? Even he that hath clean hands and a pure heart.' 'Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lift up ye everlasting doors: and the King of Glory shall come in. Who is the King of Glory: It is the Lord, strong and mighty, . . . even the Lord of Hosts, he is the King of Glory.' 'O clap your hands together, all ye people: . . . God is gone up with a merry noise and the Lord with the sound of the trump. . . . God sitteth upon His holy seat.'

In the lessons of the day from the Old Testament, we behold as in a vision, the Ancient of Days upon his throne of flaming glory, and one like the Son of Man coming with clouds, and brought near to the throne and given dominion and glory (Dan. vii. 9 to 15). We

hear, in the evening, the record of the marvellous ascension of Elijah the prophet, who went up by a whirlwind into heaven, prophetic of Christ's ascension to God's right hand (2 Kings ii.to ver. 16).

In the lessons from the New Testament we listen, in the morning, to the word-picture of the Ascension given by St. Luke (xxiv. 44 to end) : Jesus ' led them out as far as to Bethany, and He lifted up His hands and blessed them. And it came to pass, while He blessed them, He was parted from them, and carried up into heaven.' The disciples now realized the meaning of their Master's teaching, for they ' worshipped Him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy '. Their faith was greatly strengthened in their Risen Lord by His visible exaltation to Heaven.

We are taught in the evening that ' there remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God ', that our great High Priest has passed into the heavens, that He ' was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin ', therefore we should hold fast our profession and come boldly to the Throne of Grace since we have a great High Priest in Heaven who is touched with the feeling of our in firmities (Heb. iv.).

In the Epistle for the day we have read to us St. Luke's second and fuller historical account of the Ascension, taken from the Acts of the Apostles (i. 1). From it we learn that our Lord, while blessing the disciples, also solemnly charged them to wait for the promise of the Father, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and to fulfil their ministry as His faithful witnesses. And as the disciples were looking, Jesus went up and a cloud received Him out of their sight. Then the final touch is given to the beautiful picture. Behold two men stood by them in white apparel,

which also said, 'Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.'

In the gospel for the day (St. Mark xvi. 14), we have Christ's Commission to His Church, its glorious Magna Charta:—'Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.' 'So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, He was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God. And they went forth and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following.'

It is the Word of God as written in Holy Scripture that leads us to express our faith in the Creed with spiritual fervour in this crowning fact in our Lord's earthly life: 'He ascended into Heaven, He sitteth on the right hand of the Father, God Almighty.'

In the Collect we pray that we may 'in heart and mind thither ascend, and with Him continually dwell'. In the proper preface in the Communion service, we recall the comforting truth that Christ 'after His most glorious Resurrection manifestly appeared to all His Apostles, and in their sight ascended up into Heaven to prepare a place for us; that where He is, thither we might also ascend and reign with him in glory'.

The hymns for the day express in noblest praise the same blessed truth:

> Hail the day that sees Him rise
> To His throne above the skies.
>
> The head that once was crowned with thorns
> Is crowned with glory now;
> A royal diadem adorns
> The Mighty Victor's brow.

The sacred services of Ascension Day are heart-uplifting and most inspiring, helping us to seek the things that are above, 'where Christ is seated on the right hand of God.'

WHITSUNDAY

The Collect

GOD, who as at this time didst teach the hearts of thy faithful people, by the sending to them the light of thy Holy Spirit; Grant us by the same Spirit to have a right judgement in all things, and evermore to rejoice in his holy comfort; through the merits of Christ Jesus our Saviour, who liveth and reigneth with thee, in the unity of the same Spirit, one God, world without end. *Amen.*

Joy because the circling year
Brings our day of blessings here,
Day when first the light divine
On the Church began to shine.—REV. J. ELLERTON.

Breathe on me, Breath of God,
Till I am wholly Thine,
Till all this earthly part of me
Glows with Thy fire divine.—EDWIN HATCH, D.D.

What is arid, fresh bedew;
What is sordid, cleanse anew;
Balm on the wounded pour.
What is rigid, gently bend;
On what is cold, Thy fervour send;
What has strayed restore.
KING ROBERT THE PIOUS.

The effluence of Thy Light divine,
Pervading worlds, hath reached my bosom too;
Yes, in my spirit doth Thy Spirit shine,
As shines the sunbeam in a drop of dew.
DERZHAVIN.

THE lessons of Whitsuntide are amongst the most precious in the long round of the Christian Year. They all cluster around the Person, Mission, and Work of the Holy Spirit.

Whitsunday is the anniversary of the birth-day of the Church of Christ. It was on the day of Pentecost that the Holy Spirit came in the fullness of His presence and power upon the waiting disciples of the Lord Jesus. Just as the Passover was the birth-day of Israel, so Pentecost marked the birth of a new era in the Church of God. It is the irrefragable proof that God Himself is the Author of Christianity.

The Church of Christ is a spiritual organization ; its life is that of the Spirit ; its unity is due to the presence of the Spirit ; its power is all through the operation of the Spirit.

The members of the Church of Christ are all born of the Spirit, live by the Spirit, and walk in the Spirit.

The work of the Church is all carried on in humble reliance upon the Holy Spirit Himself, who ' fills the Church of God ', and who makes use of the means of grace for the furtherance of His holy purposes of blessing.

Whitsunday is by pre-eminence the Holy Spirit's Day. Our hymns of praise are all possessed with the thought of God's great gift. The Scripture lessons proclaim God's love in thus coming to the hearts of His people, to be their unceasing Comforter, Guide, and Helper. The prayers are all instinct with the thought of our need of the Holy Spirit's light and leading. The preacher's message is an appeal to Christians for a larger and fuller realization of the importance of the work of the Holy Spirit in the Church at large, and in the lives of Christ's believing people.

Whitsunday leads us back to the first principles of the Christian religion. It shows us our true position in the Church. It teaches us to lean only on the grace of Christ, and to say at every step and stage of life's pilgrimage, 'O! to grace how great a debtor, daily I'm constrained to be.' For it is grace from first to last. The Christian owes all to Christ, and it is the Holy Spirit who takes the things of Christ and brings them into personal relations with our lives:

And every virtue we possess,
And every victory won,
And every thought of holiness,
Are His alone.

The Holy Spirit meets all need. This must be so, for He is not only Divine, but Deity. He is the Lord the Life-Giver.

Christians too often associate the work of the Holy Spirit with one aspect alone of His mighty operations, that of consolation.

There are many to whom the Holy Spirit has but one name: Comforter. They forget that the thought of Comforter has behind it that of strengthening. It is not that He consoles alone, in the midst of earth's sorrows. This He undoubtedly does, but he brings as well strength to endure, and teaches His loved ones 'to suffer and be strong'.

The work of the Holy Spirit covers human life in all its bearings, in every sphere of action, whether of thought or will. In a brief study, we are only able to look at a few departments.

(1) *The Intellectual Life.* It is the Holy Spirit who leads us into all truth. His Spirit is the source and secret of Wisdom and Understanding. He is therefore

called the Teacher. And with good reason, for He is the Illuminator who gives light. 'The prayer of Ajax was for light,' and light may be said to be our greatest need. Well is it for us then, when we throw open the shutters of our souls, and with the great Milton say :

What in me is dark
Illumine, what is low raise and support.

We should constantly seek the guidance and help of the Holy Spirit. For without His presence, we shall lack that true insight which is so necessary in all search for truth. It was a saying of the Hebrews that the manna was sweet to every taste, that it suited every appetite, that it met every need in every condition of life. It is the same with Truth, which under the great Teacher becomes the food which is convenient, or which is adapted to every mind.

(2) *The Practical Life.* We gladly acknowledge the necessity of the guidance of the Holy Spirit in the Councils of the Church, but we sometimes forget His leading is essential for all right action in the life of the individual. He is the Spirit of Counsel and Might. The Holy Spirit leads the Spirit-taught man to right conclusions. The classic instance of Holy Scripture is Joseph. The secret of his wise action under all trying conditions, of his success in the face of every obstacle placed in his way, was simply this, he was a man in whom the Spirit dwelt, and who gave himself up to His leading. The Holy Spirit gives power to do the appropriate action. The counsel accepted, He furnishes the might by which it may be carried out into the region of activity, thus illuminating the mind and strengthening the will.

(3) *The Spiritual Life.* The Holy Spirit is the Author

and Sustainer of all spiritual life. He brings the life of Jesus Christ into our souls. It is through His mighty power that we become partakers of the Divine Life. The Holy Spirit is Light to guide, Fire to warm, Strength to sustain. In a word, He is God dwelling in the heart of man, and supplying his every need, by His own mighty power.

The life of growing sanctification owes its origin and its continuance to the work of the Holy Spirit in the believer's heart. It is clear that God has made perfect provision in Christ for our deliverance from the penalty and power of sin. It is the work of the Holy Spirit to make this glorious provision effectual in our lives, and it is through the power of the Holy Spirit that we are separated from sin, unto God, in Christ Jesus.

The earnest Churchman who has followed the teaching of the truth of God, as it is laid down step by step in the Christian Year, ought not to be open to the censure of a modern preacher, that many in the Christian Church are ' living on the wrong side of Pentecost '. This, he thinks, is the cause of so much failure, amidst the intense activity of the Churches to-day, the reason they ' have toiled all night and have taken nothing '. And it is with great penetration that he goes on to point out, that ' our clamant need is the fullness of the Spirit '. God stands ready to give this rich blessing, so that every believing soul may have his own Pentecost, the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, ' that vital living power which is to the Christian what genius is to the artist, and without which, whatever his technique, there is no soul.'

TRINITY SUNDAY

The Collect

ALMIGHTY and everlasting God, who hast given unto us thy servants grace by the confession of a true faith to acknowledge the glory of the eternal Trinity, and in the power of the Divine Majesty to worship the Unity; We beseech thee, that thou wouldest keep us stedfast in this faith, and evermore defend us from all adversities, who livest and reignest, one God, world without end. *Amen.*

Three Persons praise we evermore,
One only God our hearts adore.—*Latin Hymn.*

I in one God believe,
One sole eternal Godhead, of whose love
All heaven is mov'd, Himself unmoved the while.
In three eternal Persons I believe,
Essence threefold and one, mysterious league
Of union absolute.—DANTE.

THE truth of the Holy Trinity is everywhere revealed in the Bible to spiritual eyes. It runs through every part, and is woven into the whole of Scripture, whether it be history, prophecy, spiritual teaching, or biography.

It is found, for instance, in the Old Testament in the account of Creation, 'Let us make man;' in Abraham's three heavenly visitors; in the Threefold Blessing; in Isaiah's vision of the Thrice-Holy One.

The revelation is more clearly made in the New Testament. It was a true instinct on the part of the early fathers when they declared truth and met objection at the same time, by their words, 'Repair to the Jordan, and thou shalt see the Trinity.'

The objection which is sometimes made to what is termed a metaphysical conception of God fades away when we remember that the fruitfulness of our spiritual life largely depends on the richness of our view of God. For if there be choice or preference in the matter, surely one would prefer a clear view of God to an obscure one, a definite view to a confused one, in a word a true conception to a false one, or to one half emptied of its content. And Burke long ago met the objection on other lines, when he said the doctrine of the 'Trinity softens and humanizes the whole idea of divinity'.

The truth of the Holy Trinity is one of the most practical of all truths. A surface study of the subject may not make this clear. But the moment we go deeper, we find that such is indeed the case. The mysterious element seems to predominate over all else, at first glance. Yet in reality it is not as mysterious as some of the most commonplace things in life. The reason is plain, for it is not a mystery in the old sense, only made known to the initiated, but fully revealed by God. Whereas, there are a thousand things which we do not in the least understand, but which we accept mainly on account of our familiarity with them. If we were called to task concerning our belief, we could not give an explanation which would satisfy reason. And yet we act constantly in practical life upon our beliefs.

Let me name just a few instances, which will serve to illustrate many departments of life. There is the seed life in the grain, which no one has been able to explain. And yet we sow our fields, and patiently wait for the golden harvest. And who can furnish a popular, much less a scientific, explanation of the electric fluid.

We know it only by results, but that does not prevent us from using it, and to such an extent that we proudly claim to live in the electric age. There is a marvellous connexion between brain matter and human action, but who is there in all the realms of science, who can give us the account of the cause and effect, which is everywhere in evidence.

The distinction between the doctrinal and practical is not always as clear as it should be. The objection to dogma is very widespread. But one might as well object to the scaffolding in the building of a house, or to the walls themselves. The doctrine is simply the truth which is taught ; the dogma is merely its scientific statement, and the practice the appropriate action which it leads to.

In all ages of the Church's history attempts have been made from the material to illustrate the spiritual, from the world of sight to make clear the sphere of faith. This has been especially true of the Holy Trinity. St. Patrick, when he preached the gospel to the Irish, took the dear little shamrock of their fields to illustrate the three in one, and the one in three. But of course all analogies fail, and at best only partly illustrate that for which they stand. Still, there are many remarkable illustrations in nature. Physical science recognizes that in nature, there is the invisible substance of ether, and that there is matter, and that energy is found in exercise. We understand that material substances have colour, shape, and size. And we know that in colour there is the red, which is called the heat-ray, yellow, which is called the light ray, and blue, which is known as the chemical ray. The forces of nature, again, are known to be attraction, repulsion, and equilibrium. In elec-

tricity, there is the positive principle, the negative, and the electric spark. There issues from the sun light and warmth, and yet they are indivisible. There is in space, length, breadth, and height; in time, past, present, and future; in language, subject, predicate, and object. But man himself is a trinity in unity, with his body, soul, and spirit; and his feeling, thought, and will.

The truths of the Day all centre around God, His nature, His name, His work, His will. The truth of the Holy Trinity is one which satisfies the mind, and enriches the heart.

There is the Father, with all its wealth of meaning in fatherhood, the Creator, of whom we devoutly say in our Catechism, 'Who made me, and all the world.'

There is the Son, with its rich content of sonship, who loved us, and gave Himself for us, our glorious Redeemer.

There is the Holy Spirit, in all the deep spiritual significance of the Name, the great Sanctifier of the faithful.

The doctrine of the Holy Trinity is not a theory for the mind. It is an experience for the heart, a revelation of God Himself to the personal life, as a Father above us, and yet a Christ with us, and a Holy Spirit within us:

> We from Thy oneness come,
> Beyond it cannot roam,
> And in Thy oneness find our one eternal home.

There is thus, furnished to the believer, a threefold security of his salvation, which is ascribed in God's Word to each person in the Godhead. 'A threefold cord is not quickly broken.' And God has bound His children to Himself by ties of Love, and Blood, and Life, by which they are kept inviolate through all eternity.

We know now in part; the fullness of the divine life

is yet to come, in the heavenly home when the beatific vision shall be ours, and we shall enjoy what the devout spirit of Melancthon looked forward to, when he said, 'There we shall see the Holy Trinity.'

THE SUNDAYS AFTER TRINITY

THE first half of the Christian Year is devoted to the great outstanding facts of our holy religion. In it we commemorate the chief historic events of the Life of Christ, His saving work as Redeemer, the founding of the Christian Church, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and the cardinal truth of the Holy Trinity. The historical setting of Christianity is clearly portrayed, and the proper emphasis placed upon the truths springing from the events which are duly celebrated. What could be more appropriate than that the historical and doctrinal period of the Church's teaching throughout the Christian Year should close by lifting the heart and mind to God in humble adoration of His Divine Majesty, revealed to us as Trinity in Unity? The highest truth must ever yield the richest fruit. And in the doctrine of the Holy Trinity we have at once truth which satisfies the mind, warms the heart, moves the will, and sanctifies the life. Thus, in one day, we sum up the revelation of God, and find in the Confession of the Trinity in Unity, that which marks out Christianity as the religion which alone meets man's supreme need, and which makes the Gospel the glad news of God. In the full view of divine truth which it presents, it meets at once the danger of a dry Deism, and of a dreary Pantheism. The chief Saints' Days are kept in the first half of the

Church Year. It is interesting to note that, whether by design or by mere coincidence, the days of the natural year increase in length from the Nativity of our Lord, the glad Christmas festival, while they decrease from that of his great Forerunner, John the Baptist, June 24th, in keeping with the Baptist's own prophetic utterance, ' He must increase, but I must decrease.'

The Greek Church does not observe Trinity Sunday as such, and misses the influence which must flow from a faithful presentation of the truth enshrined in the celebration of the day, in Scripture lesson, in petition offered in prayer, in glad hymn of adoring praise, in ascription, in worship, in Holy Communion, and in the teaching of the preached word. Instead of Trinity Sunday, the ' Feast of all the Martyrs' is kept.

In the Roman communion, Trinity is the Octave of Pentecost, and the Sundays which follow are known as the Sundays after Pentecost.

It would appear that Trinity Sunday, as now observed, was of northern and western origin, and found designation and first celebration in the English and German Churches. The special features of the services on Trinity Sunday are, however, much more ancient than the keeping of the day itself. The Proper Preface in the Communion office is found in one of the earliest service books, known as the Gelasian Sacramentary; while the Collect is from the Sacramentary of Gregory, and the Epistle (Rev. iv. 1) and Gospel (St. John iii. 1) are those prescribed for the same day in a Lectionary in use as early as the seventh century.

The Sundays after Trinity, with certain Saints' days, form the second half of the Church Year. Their teaching is mainly practical, the carrying out into daily life of

the truth which has been learned from the facts and doctrines of Christianity. The rich privileges of the Gospel, in all its wealth of meaning, have been brought before the mind, and pressed upon the attention of Christian people. The Christian doctrine has been taught, and now the Christian life remains to be lived. Nothing proves more conclusively the wisdom of the system of the Christian Year, or its faithfulness to Scripture, than this joining together of precept with practice, and the wedding together of the saving facts and truths of the Gospel with the experiences of the daily common life. It is patent to every mind that the Gospel message of the Incarnation, and of the Atonement, the glad news of the Resurrection Life, and the Ascension and Session of Christ at God's right hand, and the Coming of the Paraclete are most fruitful facts, affecting profoundly the life of men, and the secret and source of all right living. Bishop Moule of Durham has well pointed out that the Evangelical commentator, Thomas Scott, while at Olney, devoted his week-night addresses to instructions in daily Christian living; and that the remarkable revival in our day of the desire to apply saving truth to common life, is 'a sign of divine mercy in the Church', and is 'profoundly Scriptural'.

The point of importance in every Christian system is, that Christ should be known by an act of appropriating faith, as a personal Saviour: Christ for us our atonement; that the power of the new life of the Spirit should be realized: Christ in us the hope of glory; and that there should be definite growth and progress in sanctification, the fruit of the indwelling Spirit, in a life of conscious surrender to God, and of devotion to His holy will.

And it is just here that the chief value of the teaching

of the Christian Year consists, that it attempts to bring in due order the events in God's revelation of Himself and of His will, in their successive stages, before the mind for devout study, and to place as well, in harmonious system, the leading doctrines of the faith. Trinity is followed by some twenty-five Sundays in which there are presented all the doctrines and the helpful teaching which in a full and rich theology flow from the revelation of the Trinity.

It is only on some such well-rounded plan that we can hope to see developed a Christian life entirely consistent in every part, full-orbed, and complete, free from one-sidedness, peculiarities, and vagaries.

FIRST SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

The Collect

O God, the strength of all them that put their trust in thee, mercifully accept our prayers; and because through the weakness of our mortal nature we can do no good thing without thee, grant us the help of thy grace, that in keeping of thy commandments we may please thee, both in will and deed; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Plenteous grace with Thee is found,
  Grace to cover all my sin;
Let the healing streams abound,
  Make and keep me pure within.
CHARLES WESLEY.

Grace taught my soul to pray,
  And made my eyes o'erflow;
'Twas grace which kept me to this day,
  And will not let me go.—TOPLADY.

THE spiritual teaching brought before Christian people on the First Sunday after Trinity is of the highest importance in Christian progress in the life of faith.

The leading idea of the Sunday is expressed in the Collect for the Day, which is a confession of human weakness, and a prayer for God's Grace, without which we cannot walk in the path of Obedience.

The Collect itself, like all the prayers of the Liturgy, is almost in the very language of Scripture. 'The flesh is weak,' said the Lord Jesus, and 'without Me ye can do nothing'. We accept the Invitation which lies behind the exhortation of God's Word, 'Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.' And we acknowledge that it is 'God which worketh' in us 'both to will and to do of His good pleasure.'

The Christian lives in the rich light of privilege, the dispensation of the Spirit, the fullness of Grace and Truth. Grace and Truth became personal, as Lange points out, in Christ. Truth is light to lead, and grace is strength to live.

Grace is the characteristic feature of Christianity, 'by grace are ye saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God.'

What a thought is 'Grace'! What a word is grace! What a marvel is grace! What a power is grace! Is there anything higher? loftier? nobler? Professor Drummond wrote that 'Love is the greatest thing in the world'. But behind the truest love we know, the Love of God, stands Grace. Grace is one of the great words of Holy Scripture, and in its original significance means favour, pity, or in larger meaning, undeserved

goodness on the part of the greater to the less; spiritualized, it is the saving love of God to sinners deserving wrath instead of mercy. Grace, then, is the favour or the gift of God to the undeserving.

The wonderful Salvation which God has given us in Jesus Christ is all Grace. Grace first in the heart of the Great Giver, the Gift Grace, the Token Grace, the Promise Grace, the Work Grace, the Life sustained by Grace, Grace by which the sins are forgiven, Grace by which the heart is renewed, Grace by which the affections are purified, Grace by which the life is sanctified.

In the Collect the word Grace is employed in that special sense which we use when we speak of the work of God in our hearts, where He dwells, destroying the power of sin, and promoting likeness to Christ. This is the peculiar office of the Holy Spirit, the Sanctifier of the faithful, the great Illuminator, the Divine Comforter.

Grace stands ready to help at every step and stage of the Christian pilgrimage. There is the Grace of preparation, which popular theology describes as Conviction. But it is much more, for it covers all that moves and draws the heart of man from self to Christ, for we know:

> That even in savage bosoms
> There are longings, yearnings, strivings,
> For the good they comprehend not—

those conscious and unconscious impressions, which we only know as heart hunger and soul thirst:

> A thirst no earthly stream can satisfy,
> A hunger that must feed on Christ, or die.

There is enlightening Grace, what Martensen calls 'the visitation of the Spirit with the mighty call of grace'.

Above all, there is sanctifying Grace, by which the believer is purified from sin, and his life renewed after the image of God. This process is definitely known as growth in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Epistle for the Day is St. John's urgent call to Christians to love one another (1 John iv. 7).

The Gospel is the solemn warning of our Lord Jesus Christ in the story of the Rich Man and Lazarus, of the danger of procrastination in spiritual things, of the awful tragedy which ensues, when we do not live up to the light that God gives in Scripture, and the fearful consequences of unbelief (Luke xvi. 19).

The Old Testament Lessons are taken from the Book of Joshua (Joshua iii. 7–iv. 15; v. 13–vi. 21; or xxiv.). The leading idea is the promise of God to be with His people, combined with the thought of His mighty power. The Lord Himself is our Keeper, and if God be for us, who can be against us.

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

The Collect

O LORD, who never failest to help and govern them whom thou dost bring up in thy stedfast fear and love; Keep us, we beseech thee, under the protection of thy good providence, and make us to have a perpetual fear and love of thy holy Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

In the centre of the circle of the love of God I stand,
There can be no 'second causes', all must come from His dear hand.
All is well: for is it not my Father who my life hath planned?

J. H. SHARP.

THE central teaching of the Collect for the Second Sunday after Trinity is that of God's good Providence. The prayer, which as its name denotes, collects in few words many desires, breathes the spirit of deepest faith in the all-ruling and all-powerful Providence of God. It is touched throughout with the apostolic thought, 'being confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.' It does not hesitate to invite all who use it to lean upon the heavenly promise, 'He hath said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.'

The Collect makes the very Word of God its plea: 'The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil,' and rests the believer's cause upon the Divine undertaking: 'He shall defend thee under His wings.' And, in view of the Divine provision, there is sought as well a proper spirit of reverential awe on the part of the trusting soul, that fear which is true wisdom, that love which burns brightly for God, a reverence which ever remembers what God is, and who we are.

The Epistle (1 John iii. 13) describes the power of Love, by which the Christian is assured of his rich spiritual privileges. The place of Faith is also shown, in closest association with Love. Faith is first: 'This is His commandment, That we should believe on the Name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another.'

The Gospel, from St. Luke xiv. 16, is the Evangelical invitation to the Marriage Feast, a picture of the universality of Christianity, the wondrous grace of God, the holy compulsion of His love, and the adequateness of His preparation for all human need.

The Old Testament Lessons (Judges iv. and v., or vi. 11) describe the deliverance of God's people in the time

of the Judges. He is able to save by many, or by few. He is our Fortress and Defence. In the words of the old Hussite battle song:

Why should you faint or fear? He shall preserve you still;
Life, love—all that 's dear, yield to His holy will;
And He shall steel your hearts, and strengthen against ill.

The doctrine of the Providence of God is a very important one, and of special interest in our time. It needs to be brought more frequently before Christian people. There are views, which are held consciously or unconsciously by many, which are contrary to the teaching of Scripture, in regard to God's government of the world. And the spirit of materialistic philosophy runs directly contrary to the truth of Providence, that God orders and overrules all things according to His holy will. It is a truth clearly revealed in the Old Testament, and everywhere emphasized in the New:

Not a sparrow falleth but your God doth know.

Providence is a doctrine which finds its basis in the character of God as Creator-Father, and in the nature of man as a dependent being. It is impossible to conceive a God, absolutely perfect in His nature, having all power, who would create a world and care nothing about it afterwards. Even the heathen, apart from revelation, have felt this, and have boldly defended, as in the case of Cicero, belief in a Providence.

In Christian theology, it has long been recognized that, while God's care is over all His works, there are different degrees in its exercise. There is a general Providence which covers the whole field of creation; a particular Providence which is concerned with man, and a special Providence which embraces the children of the Kingdom.

We cannot see the end from the beginning now, but the time is coming when God's ways will be justified, and His providential working will appear as beautiful as it is perfect and complete.

There are, said the saintly Rutherford, a thousand keys in the hand of Providence to open a thousand doors. And certain it is that there are many thousands of instances of the overruling of conditions, and circumstances, and events by God. Wellington was no enthusiast, yet he wrote a brief note after Waterloo, which ended thus :— 'I have escaped unhurt ; the finger of Providence was on me.' And there are few things more remarkable in history than the experience of Louis Caldy, a native of Montpellier, in France, during the earthquake at Port Royal, Jamaica, in 1692. His epitaph reads, that 'he was swallowed up by the earthquake . . . but, by the great providence of God, was, by a second shock, flung into the sea, where he continued swimming till rescued by a boat, and lived forty years afterwards.' It was a sense of the constant love and care of God over him, that led Richard Boyle, the great Earl of Cork, who had risen with God's blessing from small beginnings, to take as his motto, 'God's Providence is my inheritance.'

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

The Collect

O Lord, we beseech thee mercifully to hear us ; and grant that we, to whom thou hast given an hearty desire to pray, may by thy mighty aid be defended and comforted in all dangers and adversities ; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

A breath that fleets beyond this iron world,
And touches Him that made it.—TENNYSON.

Speak to Him thou, for He hears, and spirit with Spirit can meet;
Closer is He than breathing, and nearer than hands and feet. TENNYSON.

I know not by what methods rare,
But this I know, God answers prayer.
E. M. HICKOK.

PRAYER is of God. God is an answerer of prayer. These two great principles stand out to-day in the teaching of the Church. And every Christian acknowledges their importance in the Christian life. The teaching of Scripture has been verified, again and again, in Christian experience.

It is God who, through His Spirit, gives the desire to pray. As the great Augustine truly said: 'Thou hast made us for Thyself, and our hearts are restless till they rest in Thee.' The desire to know God is born of God, and without His divine aid, we can have no knowledge of Him, for He is the source and secret and sum of all knowledge.

It is God's own voice within us, when we offer true prayer. 'The Spirit itself maketh intercession for us.' It is in our behalf that the prayer is made. The Spirit of God influences, as it were, our thought, lays His loving hand upon the harp-strings of our life, and breathes forth His own longings of holiness in our petitions. As Bishop Handley Moule clearly and succinctly puts it: 'The Holy Ghost, immanent in him, prays through him.'

All true prayer moves in the region of the divine. It is suffused with the Spirit of God. It begins and ends in God. Martensen has shown us its philosophy: 'In the same degree in which prayer is truly made in His

Name is it also heard; for in the same degree it is He Himself who prays through us.' Indeed, long centuries before, Augustine with true spiritual instinct declared, 'Christ prays for us as a priest, prays in us as our Head, is prayed to by us as our God. Let us recognize, therefore, our voices in Him, and His voices in us.'

The Epistle (1 Pet. v. 5) is the apostle's exhortation to humility of life, his warning of perils along the path of our pilgrimage, and his assurance of victory through Christ.

The Gospel (Luke xv. 1) contains the great parable of the Lost Sheep, and the Lost Coin, with its revelation of heaven's joy 'over one sinner that repenteth'.

The Old Testament Lessons (1 Sam. ii. 1–27; 1 Sam. iii.; or iv. 1–19) tell the story of Samuel's early spiritual experiences, voice Hannah's thankfulness, show forth the wrath of God against the sin of Eli's sons, recount the war between Israel and the Philistines with the loss of the ark of God, and record the death of Eli.

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

The Collect

O God, the protector of all that trust in thee, without whom nothing is strong, nothing is holy; Increase and multiply upon us thy mercy; that, thou being our ruler and guide, we may so pass through things temporal, that we finally lose not the things eternal: Grant this, O heavenly Father, for Jesus Christ's sake our Lord. *Amen.*

Thou wert always our Father! Each sun that arose
Has done nothing through life but fresh mercies disclose.

FABER.

Mercy! carried infinite degrees
Beyond the tenderness of human hearts.
WORDSWORTH.

THE loving mercy of God, 'our Ruler and Guide,' throughout the whole pilgrimage of our life, is the leading idea of the services of to-day.

The acknowledgement is most thankfully made, that God is the Protector of the faithful, 'of all that trust in' Him. The great truth is freely confessed that God is the sole strength of His people, the only source and secret of holiness.

There is a very beautiful name for God in the Book of Jonah the Prophet. Jehovah is called there by the sweet and blessed name of Mercy (ii. 8). He is the Fountain and Well-spring of Love. He is called by the Psalmist (lix. 17) 'the God of my Mercy', which taken still more literally means, my loving-kindness God. And David (Ps. cxliv.) calls God, 'my Goodness,' or literally, 'my Mercy,' who constantly displays this gracious spirit to me.

Mercy is the great prerogative of God. Milton loved to dwell on the thought that 'Mercy first and last shall brightest shine'. God is 'rich in mercy'; His mercies fail not, they are new every morning; 'He keeps mercy for thousands.' It is immeasurable: 'Thy mercy is above the heavens;' it is infinite: 'His mercy endureth for ever;' it is all-embracing, for He is the All-Merciful. It was through the tender mercies of God that the Dayspring from on high came to visit us. And the blessed Saviour is described as 'a merciful and faithful High Priest'.

The mercy of God follows us all our lives long. It is of His mercy that He gives us life, and health, and

strength. Mercy is the atmosphere in which we live, the gracious light, the refreshing dew.

The Mercy of God invites us to approach His throne of grace, first, to obtain forgiveness, and then to seek help for every time of need. This is the divine order, first mercy and then grace. In these two blessings we possess all the riches of the divine favour.

As John Bunyan quaintly said, all the flowers in God's garden are double ; we may speak of God's mercy as if it were the sum total of His heart of love, but we cannot forget in our Christian experience the ever flowing stream of mercies coming forth as from a fountain, ' free and full as a river,' making glad and refreshing life at every point which it touches.

The Epistle (Rom. viii. 18) is St. Paul's inspired utterance concerning the coming glory of Christ's people, in the glorious prospect of which the sufferings of the present are not worthy of mention.

The Gospel (Luke vi. 36) is the Saviour's teaching concerning mercy, beautifully paraphrased by Shakespeare :

> We do pray for mercy ;
> And that same prayer doth teach us all to render
> The deeds of mercy.

The Gospel contains as well a warning against false teachers in religion, and a call to consistency of life, before we venture to reprove others ourselves.

The Old Testament Lessons (1 Sam. xii., xiii. ; or Ruth i.) furnish a picture of the early history of Israel, the story of the granting of a king, and of the early years of his reign, while the alternative lesson from the book of Ruth is a marvellous word painting of primitive Jewish life, and of the fidelity and devotion of one of the most beautiful of Old Testament characters.

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

The Collect

GRANT, O Lord, we beseech thee, that the course of this world may be so peaceably ordered by thy governance, that thy Church may joyfully serve thee in all godly quietness; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

And give us peace; peace in the church and school,
Peace to the powers who o'er our country rule,
Peace to the conscience, peace within the heart,
Do Thou impart. LÖWENSTERN.

THE service of the Church for God and humanity, in a world in which peace reigns, through the ordering of God's good Providence, is the subject of prayer to-day.

This would seem to be the ideal condition for Christian work, Peace within and without, the world free from disquiet, the Church united in joyful service for the King.

It was so at the first coming of the Christ. Milton has in splendid verse described the peaceful condition of the world when the Christ-child was born, 'on the morning of Christ's Nativity:'

> No war, or battle's sound,
> Was heard the world around; . . . .
> But peaceful was the night
> Wherein the Prince of Light
> His reign of peace upon the earth began.

The world has seldom been at peace since. There have not only been wars and rumours of wars, but campaigns which have lasted almost through a century of time. The waste of life and material possessions has been incalculable. It was stated by Sir Edward Fry at The Hague Peace Conference of 1907 that the military expenditure of the world is now £320,000,000 sterling

a year. The amount of money spent in armaments, in the preparation for war, not to speak of actual war, itself, would have carried the Gospel of Christ by living messengers many times over to every quarter of the globe.

It was a thought of Longfellow :

Were half the power that fills the world with terror,
Were half the wealth bestowed on camps and courts,
Given to redeem the human mind from error
There were no need of arsenals or forts.

But we will do well to ask : Has the Church lived up to its privileges, and stood ready to seize the passing opportunities in the great world-field of action ? The strife of men, the wars of nations, may be used by the Church for the furtherance of the Gospel. And certain it is, that war, however to be deprecated, has been a means, by the overruling hand of God, by which whole countries have been opened up to the ambassadors of Christ and the soldiers of the Cross.

Then there is this to be considered as well : What seems to our judgement to be an ideal condition for the work of God, may not be so to the All-Seeing eye. Peace would appear to be most desirable in the interests of the Gospel of Christ. And yet the Lord Jesus Himself declared, ' Think not that I am come to send peace on earth : I came not to send peace, but a sword.' There can be no peace between right and wrong, between truth and falsehood, between harmony and discord. And until the hearts of men are brought into right relations with God, the Gospel of Christ must ever cause division, and until right triumphs there must ever be war with wrong, the universal reign of peace lies before us, for it we must pray and labour.

We do well to pray and work for the unity and peace

of the Church, for we may well believe that the union of the Christian forces would tend to greater efficiency, and lead, under God, to much larger results. Then it might be possible to realize the bright dream of the evangelization of the world in a single generation of mankind.

The Epistle, from 1 St. Peter iii. 8, is an appeal for Christ-like character and conduct, and a beautiful eulogy of the blessings of peace.

The Gospel (St. Luke v. 1) is the story of the miraculous draught of fishes, 'from the most sacred sheet of water which the earth contains,' which furnished an appropriate setting to the Lord Jesus, as the fishermen looked upon the shining fish bursting from the broken net, for His prophetic utterance to Peter, 'Fear not, from henceforth thou shalt catch men.'

The Old Testament Lessons (1 Sam. xv. to 24, xvi., or xvii.) tell the story of Saul's disobedience when he was sent to destroy Amalek; the anointing of David to be king, and the challenge of Goliath, the giant of Gath, its acceptance by David, who, ascribing all the power to God, by a stone from the brook and a simple sling laid the giant low in death.

SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

The Collect

O God, who hast prepared for them that love thee such good things as pass man's understanding; Pour into our hearts such love toward thee, that we, loving thee above all things, may obtain thy promises, which exceed all that we can desire; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

I say to thee, do thou repeat
To the first man thou mayest meet,
In lane, highway, or open street,
That he, and we, and all things move,
Under a canopy of Love,
As broad as the blue dome above.—ABP. TRENCH.

LOVE and its gracious fruitage in this world, and that which is to come, is the heart of the services to-day. God's love to man is acknowledged. For God's love is the source and secret of all good. 'Every good and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights.' And then the fullness of God's love is sought in prayer, that our hearts may love the loving Father 'above all things'.

The Love of God to mankind has ever been in evidence, and has been shown a thousand ways. But its perfect revelation and complete expression is in Jesus Christ. He is the 'Word', the utterance of the Divine Mind, the embodiment of the Father's Heart, the declaration of God's Will, yea, the incarnation of the Deity, 'God manifest in the flesh.'

God desires our Love. This is a truth too often forgotten. The loving longing of the great heart of God for our affection in true love yielded to Him, is a foremost truth of revelation. It found expression in the Old Covenant in an eternal principle which had all the sanctities of the divine law:—'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God,' the exercise of which the New Covenant declared is 'the fulfilling of the law'.

God claims our highest Love. The Collect for to-day recognizes the validity of this claim, and voices the heart's petition, that it may be fulfilled in 'loving Thee

above all things'. The measure of our love to God is marked by His own requirement, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind.' As St. Bernard truly says, 'The measure of our love to God is to love Him without measure; for the immense goodness of God deserves all the love that we can possibly give to Him.'

The character of this Love is described, and its degree marked. It is affectionate, cordial, fervent, grateful, pure, reverent, and strong. It is to be exercised with 'all' the powers of our being. The 'heart', the seat of the affections, is to find in God its complete satisfaction. The 'soul', the life itself, with its immortal longings, is to go out towards God, who alone can satisfy its eternal needs. The 'mind', the centre of the intellectual powers, is to rest in the infinite Mind, in the absolute Truth. The 'strength' of man is to find exercise in this supreme act of love, all the faculties of our nature, in all their might, are to go out to God in purest devotion of heart and life. Scheffler long ago expressed it in praise, which had in it the spirit of prayer:

> That all my powers, with all their might,
> In Thy sole glory may unite.

The Love which we are to show towards God is born of His Spirit, 'The fruit of the Spirit is Love.' It arises within our hearts as a result of our union with Christ by faith. It is a product of the divine nature. It is the love of Christ shed abroad in our hearts. 'We love because He first loved us.' If we are to love God truly, and, springing from that divine love, our fellow-men as well, it can only be as our hearts are yielded to Jesus

Christ, whose 'nature and whose name is Love,' in trustful faith, our love issuing from Him as from an inexhaustible fountain.

The Epistle (Rom. vi. 3) is St. Paul's description of the vital union which there is between Christ and His believing people. They are buried with Him in Baptism, and raised up with Him in His resurrection life, in the newness of which they are to live and walk.

The Gospel (Matt. v. 20) is from our blessed Lord's Sermon on the Mount, in which He vindicates the spirituality of the Law, and shows its abiding sanctions. He brings out its heartsearching character, and gives to the Church in every age illustrative examples upon which the conduct of Christians is to be based.

The Old Testament Lessons (2 Sam. i.; 2 Sam. xii. 1–24; or xviii.) furnish us with the pathetic story of the death of Saul, Israel's first king, and give us David's sad lament over his beloved Jonathan.

SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

The Collect

LORD of all power and might, who art the author and giver of all good things; Graft in our hearts the love of thy Name, increase in us true religion, nourish us with all goodness, and of thy great mercy keep us in the same; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

O Lord! to dust my faint soul cleaves:
Rich is thy sowing, few my sheaves.
I own Thy bounteous gifts, but mourn
My scanty and perverse return.
I know not all I say in this,
But give, oh, give me Holiness.

THE Seventh Sunday after Trinity has been called the Sunday of Nutrition, from its Gospel, the miracle of the loaves.

The thought uppermost in the Christian heart, however, as voiced in the Collect for the Day, is that of growth in Holiness. The Collect itself is a prayer for grace in the life of sanctification.

God is the source of all holiness of life. The Spirit is called 'the Holy Spirit,' the Spirit of holiness. The Christian is called 'the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.' The scriptural character of the Collect is seen in its clear recognition of God as the 'Author and Giver of all good things', for, as St. James declares, 'Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights.'

The Christian life is a derived life. 'I am the True Vine,' said the Lord Jesus, 'and ye are the branches.' The relation of the believer to the Saviour is as intimate, as close, as real, as is the branch to the vine. The Christian is joined to Christ by faith, and united in mysterious union, grafted into the fullness of His divine life by the Spirit, and lives in Christ. This is the secret of the Fruit of the Spirit, Who takes the things of Christ and produces them in our lives. How true are the words of the prophet, 'From Me is thy fruit found!' Then, again, the Lord Christ said, 'The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life.' And St. James bids Christians to 'receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save' their 'souls'. The Word of God, as a perfect graft, influences the whole character, and brings forth the fruit of holiness in the

life. It is no wonder that the myriad-minded Shakespeare saw its wondrous influence :

> This is an art
> Which does mend nature—change it, rather.

And so the great Husbandman grafts in our hearts the love of His name, for love is of God, and ' the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost '.

Where there is life there is growth, and St. Peter bids those to whom he wrote, to ' grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ '. And the Collect is in entire keeping with St. Paul's prayer for his beloved Corinthians, ' Now He that ministereth seed to the sower . . . increase the fruits of your righteousness.' The good work which God has begun, He will perfect. He will supply every need of His people, and nourish them with all goodness. The promise of the Psalmist is theirs : ' Those that be planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God.'

The Epistle (Rom. vi. 19) is a call to holiness, by yielding the whole life to the service of God.

The Gospel (Mark viii. 1) is the miracle of the feeding of the Four Thousand, the great lesson of God's bountiful provision for human need. He that feeds the body, will provide for the soul.

The Old Testament Lessons (1 Chron. xxi., xxii., or xxviii.) tell the story of the preparation for the Temple of God by King David, and are fruitful in suggestion in regard to sanctification.

The root idea of holiness is the life set apart for God. And as Robert Murray McCheyne said, ' The whole Bible testifies that the ways in which the Spirit leads us are ways of pleasantness and peace.' Holiness is happiness.

EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

The Collect

O God, whose never-failing providence ordereth all things both in heaven and earth; We humbly beseech thee to put away from us all hurtful things, and to give us those things which be profitable for us; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

'Tis true the heart will often quail
When the way is dark and drear,
Then closer cling to Him whose voice
Can still each rising fear,
And make these darkened hearts of ours
As bright as heaven is clear.—Anon.

THE need of God's keeping power is ever present to the Christian's mind. It is a truth of experience, as well as of revelation, that we are dependent beings. We cannot keep ourselves. We need constant supplies from God, both for body and for soul: 'Give us this day our daily bread,' a merciful provision for our physical and spiritual needs.

The Collect is a confession of God's never-failing Providence, and of His gracious ordering of all things in heaven and earth. It is also a prayer for deliverance from all that would hurt or hinder us in our earthly pilgrimage: 'Deliver us from evil.' It rests its faith in God, the Almighty, who preserves, rules, and orders all things. It remembers the Covenant in its cry, 'for those things which be profitable for us.' 'My God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.'

The Epistle (Rom. viii. 12) is a call to the Christian to a Spirit-led life. It reminds us of the glorious

assurance of the Spirit, that we who believe 'are the children of God', and if so what can be wanting, for 'if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ.' Can more be said?

The Gospel (Matt. vii. 15) is a warning against false teachers. No warning is more necessary for our times, for thousands seem willing to accept any teaching which has a semblance to religion. The test furnished is that of fruit-bearing. 'By their fruits' are they to be known. Sound doctrine and holy living should go together.

The Old Testament Lessons (1 Chron. xxix. 9–29; 2 Chron. i.; or 1 Kings iii.) continue the story of all that was in David's heart as he provided for the building of the Lord's House; and carry us to Solomon's work for God, as he sought the Divine Wisdom in the mighty work committed to his hands.

It is a lesson for all times, and for all Christians, the feeling of need, of utter and entire dependence upon God. The shores of eternity are strewn with shattered wrecks of many who trusted in themselves. But no one, who, looking away from self to Christ has trusted Him, has ever sunk to rise no more. They cannot sink, for the promise runs, 'when thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee.'

The guardian care of God is ever over His people. Never for a moment does He leave them, nor forsake them. 'The Lord Himself is thy keeper,' and with unceasing vigilance He watches above His own. The believer's security is complete: 'He keeps him as the apple of His eye.' The Christian may rest unhesitatingly upon the sure word, 'Kept by the mighty power of God.'

The merciful provision of God for the children of His love and care is constant and sure. 'He gives us all

things richly to enjoy.' He has provided for His people through all the ages, sending 'rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling their hearts with food and gladness.' Above all, He has given us His Son Jesus Christ, and He that spared not His Son, 'but freely gave Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?'

NINTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

The Collect

GRANT to us, Lord, we beseech thee, the spirit to think and do always such things as be rightful; that we, who cannot do any thing that is good without thee, may by thee be enabled to live according to thy will: through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Thrice holy Fount, thrice holy Fire,
Our hearts with heavenly love inspire.
Tr. from Latin by DRYDEN.

If in Thee it be not wrought,
All in men is simply nought,
Nothing pure in deed and thought.
Tr. from Latin by WM. MERCER.

THE blessing of spiritual enlightenment, and the need of spiritual power to follow God's leading and to fulfil His will, are borne in upon the Christian's heart to-day, and form the subject of his earnest petition at the throne of grace.

This was in large part Milton's noble prayer:

Thou, O Spirit, that dost prefer
Before all temples the upright heart and pure,
Instruct me.

But there is a further plea for grace to carry out into loving faithful deed the God-inspired thought, for strength to be a doer of the Word, and not a hearer only.

The Holy Spirit is the author of good thoughts. He alone can help us to fulfil the commandment, to love God with all our mind. For He alone can give us the mind which was in Christ Jesus. The prayer seeks His guidance and controlling power over the mental processes. It tells of our desire to think right thoughts, and in the very cry for the good, there is as well the exclusion of the evil. For the way to banish wrong thoughts from the mind, is to have it occupied with the good. It was a saying of Luther, as he spoke of the terrible injury wrought by evil thoughts, that while we may not be able to prevent the birds from flying above us, we can keep them from building their nests in our hair. We need not give the wrong thoughts a lodgement, and the great principle of Chalmers is along the same lines of thought, as he spoke of ' the expulsive power of a new affection '. It is the light that drives out the darkness.

The Holy Spirit is the great Teacher. It is His office to take the things of Christ, and to bring them home to the minds of men. The believer who looks to the Holy Spirit for light and leading is literally ' taught of God '. The Holy Spirit is not only the inspirer of the Word of God, but He is its interpreter as well.

The right thought needs to be translated into action. ' Go put your creed into your deed,' says Emerson.

How can this be done ? We confess that we ' cannot do anything that is good without Thee ', in words which seem almost to re-echo what the Saviour Himself said, ' Without Me ye can do nothing.'

The whole secret lies in the power of the Holy Spirit,

whose gracious assistance we ask. And this is entirely scriptural: 'Teach me to do Thy will, for Thou art my God; Thy Spirit is good.' Nay, more; we seek a surrendered will and life, and practically say, 'Not my will but Thine be done.' And this brings us into direct touch with God's mode of working, as St. Peter tells us of the power of 'the Holy Ghost, which God hath given to them that obey Him'.

The Epistle (1 Cor. x. 1) points to the source of supply of every spiritual blessing—Christ, the Rock of Ages, and raises a note of warning touching the frailty of our mortal nature, the dangers which beset our path in the way of manifold temptations, and assures us of the faithfulness of God.

The Gospel (Luke xvi. 1) brings before us the responsibility of stewardship, and draws the lesson of the supreme importance of the things of the spirit, from the actions of men in time.

The Old Testament Lessons are taken from 1 Kings x. 1–25; xi. 1–15, or xxvi., and are most suggestive in teaching concerning the office and work of the Holy Spirit, who is the Spirit of Wisdom. While Solomon sought the guidance of God, the wise thought was succeeded by the wise deed. But when he leaned upon his own fancied wisdom, and rested in his own judgement, he failed and fell.

No lesson is more important for the individual Christian, and for the Church of Christ, than that of the knowledge of human frailty, and our entire dependence upon the Holy Spirit.

TENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

The Collect

LET thy merciful ears, O Lord, be open to the prayers of thy humble servants; and that they may obtain their petitions make them to ask such things as shall please thee; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

That God grants prayer, but in His love
Makes times, and ways His own.

We, ignorant of ourselves,
Beg often our own harms, but the wise powers
Deny us for our good.

The prayers I make will then be sweet indeed,
If Thou the Spirit give by which I pray:
My unassisted heart is barren clay,
That of its native self can nothing feed.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

THE subject of prayer is prominently brought before the mind to-day, and the Collect clearly shows the secret of successful prayer.

What is that blessed secret? It is the spirit that yields itself completely to the will of God. The first element of true prayer is self-surrender. 'Father . . . not my will but Thine be done.'

There is a step, however, that precedes obedience. That step is faith, and without faith prayer is impossible. In order to come to God we must believe that He is, and in order to come acceptably, or indeed to any purpose, we must trust Him. This is the spirit of the child life, which Jesus taught us we must possess before we can enter the kingdom.

Then personal trust and self-surrender going hand in

hand, we enter into the region of promise, ' If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.' The condition is fulfilled, and we can come with perfect confidence to God, Who is both a hearer and an answerer of prayer.

But there is in the Collect, not only the thought of faith, and of submission, but also of the need of guidance, if we are to pray aright. How entirely scriptural it is, for we know not what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit helpeth our infirmities, voices our deep need, and teaches us to pray for such things as are for our good.

It is thus that our poor and imperfect petitions are filled with higher purpose ; the weak instrument of earth, being touched by the breath of the Spirit, yields the music of heaven. This is true harmony, the soul of man in sweet accord with the mind and will of God.

There can be no question about the answer, when the primary conditions are fulfilled. There was no revelation of Jesus Christ more clearly or more constantly given than the perfect certainty of an answer to prayer. He pledged His word that it should be fulfilled, nay more, that He would, in His own person, furnish the answer. ' Whatsoever ye shall ask in My name, that will I do.' Godet points out that the received reading gives emphasis to the promise, ' I myself will do it.'

How can the response be wanting, when the heart looks up to God in childlike trust, the will is brought into accord with the Divine will, the Spirit speaks from within the soul, the petition is offered in the name of Jesus, and Christ Himself, at the right hand of the Father, presents as our great advocate our wants and wishes at the throne of Grace ?

The Epistle (1 Cor. xii. 1) develops the thought of the need of spiritual gifts, which can only come from the Holy Spirit. It lays stress upon the manifold character of the gifts which flow from the Divine Spirit's presence in the Church, which is the Body of Christ. In the Divine Wisdom, these rich gifts are varied to meet the individual need, and to fulfil God's holy purpose in the life of the individual, and in the work of His Church.

The Gospel (Luke xix. 41) portrays Christ weeping over Jerusalem. It is a lesson of the tender compassion of the Lord Jesus, the depth of His yearning love for sinners, of His willingness to save even to the uttermost. The cleansing of the temple shows the reverence He felt for the House of Prayer.

The Old Testament Lessons (1 Kings xii., xiii., or xvii.) tell the story of the division of the Kingdoms of Israel and Judah, and incidentally illustrate the need of prayer, if we are to be guided aright amidst the perplexities of life; while the last lesson shows the efficacy of prayer in the person of Elijah, who stands in Scriptures as a notable example of a man who had power with God, and who prevailed.

ELEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

The Collect

O God, who declarest thy almighty power most chiefly in showing mercy and pity; Mercifully grant unto us such a measure of thy grace, that we, running the way of thy commandments, may obtain thy gracious promises, and be made partakers of thy heavenly treasure; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Oh, let Thy sacred will
All Thy delight in me fulfil!
Let me not think an action mine own way,
But as Thy love shall sway;
Resigning up the rudder to Thy skill.—GEORGE HERBERT.

Obedience is nobler than freedom! What's free?
The vex'd straw on the wind, the froth'd spume on the sea!
The great ocean itself, as it rolls and it swells,
In the bonds of a boundless obedience dwells.—LYTTON.

THE life of Obedience, as the Collect beautifully suggests, is a fruit of grace. It is the 'obedience of faith'. For faith has in it the element of obedience, and faith certainly leads to obedience. There is the thought of submission as well as of trust.

Obedience is due to God, by us, as His children. It is the perfect conformity of our hearts and minds to His holy will. It is positive, in that it aims at the carrying out of God's direct commands, and negative in that it seeks to avoid all that is contrary to His word and will. It is born of love to Christ. 'If ye love Me,' said the Lord Jesus, 'keep My commandments.' It is universal in its application, covering every phase of duty to God and man.

It is along the path of obedience that we learn more fully the will of God. 'If any man will do His will,' said Christ, 'he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of Myself.' For this reason, obedience has been called the organ of spiritual knowledge. For Christianity is not simply a religion of theory, but of practice. Indeed, it is known only in practice.

In Hebrew history there were two outstanding characters, who stood in the long history of the people

as examples of the meaning of obedience, and of disobedience.

In the roll of spiritual heroes there is nothing nobler than the heroism of Abraham, who, ' when he was tried, offered up Isaac.' ' All ages,' as Bishop Hall so justly says, ' have stood amazed ' at Abraham's faith. It issued indeed in perfect obedience. There was no reserve in it, no holding back, but absolute surrender to God's command. It was this that made Abraham, the ' father of the faithful ', the spiritual father of all who believe. By the grace of God, he trusted God's word, he yielded his will to the divine, and his faith led to action. This is obedience, belief in action.

Moses stands forth on the page of Holy Writ as a character almost faultless, wearing the ' white flower of a blameless life '. The faith of the man is almost equal to the sublime trust of Abraham, his meekness is exceptional, his spirit of self-sacrifice and devotion unsurpassed, his unselfishness an inspiration.

But even Moses, ' the man of God,' fails. One only, the Lord Jesus, has lived the life of perfect trust and absolute obedience. Moses, at Meribah, fell into unbelief and disobedience. It was but one little act, of a man wearied out by an exasperating people, under trying conditions, but it settled like a blight on the fair flower of his life. The meekest of men was filled with anger, the heart of faith was overcast with doubt, the submissive will rebelled; there was a threefold fall into doubt, wrath, disobedience.

And from this one act came forth the most bitter disappointment that could have befallen Moses. He was not suffered to enter the land of promise. The prayer of this patriot heart, to set foot in the God-given

land, was not granted, that all Israel throughout their generations might learn the terrible evil of disobedience. The loss of one man thus became a source of infinite gain to a people, throughout all their national history, in blessing which overflowed their boundaries, and enriched the whole world.

The Epistle (1 Cor. xv. 1–12) while it primarily refers to the Resurrection of Christ, teaches the deepest lessons concerning the work of grace in the believer's heart. 'By the grace of God I am what I am.'

The Gospel (Luke xviii. 9–15) is the matchless story of the Pharisee and the Publican in the Temple at prayer, with its rich teaching of the meaning of mercy, grace, and humility, and its plain warnings against self-righteousness.

The Old Testament Lessons (1 Kings xviii, xix, or xxi) furnish the chief points in the life of Elijah, that mighty man of God, whose grand mission was to lead back a straying people into the pathway of obedience, and to vindicate the name of Jehovah as the one God above all, whose we are, and whom we ought to serve.

TWELFTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

The Collect

ALMIGHTY and everlasting God, who art always more ready to hear than we to pray, and art wont to give more than either we desire, or deserve; Pour down upon us the abundance of thy mercy; forgiving us those things whereof our conscience is afraid, and giving us those good things which we are not worthy to ask, but through the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ, thy Son, our Lord. *Amen.*

Conscience does make cowards of us all.
SHAKESPEARE.

Oh that I knew if He forgiveth!
My soul is faint within,
Because in grievous fear it liveth
Of wages due to sin.—TWELLS.

I am a sinner full of doubts and fears,
Make me a humble thing of Love and Tears.
HARTLEY COLERIDGE.

THE gracious gift of God's forgiveness is the great theme, the one thought of the Collect. God is the Giver of all, of every good and perfect gift, and He alone can forgive sin.

'There is forgiveness with Thee' (Ps. cxxx. 4). It is in the light of this revelation that we approach God; apart from it we have no encouragement to draw nigh to God.

Under the Old Testament dispensation, God provided a way of access by which the sinner could come to Him seeking the promised forgiveness. This is found as early as the days of Abel, of whom the divine record says, 'The Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering' (Gen. iv. 4). The sacrifice offered by Abraham was divinely appointed. The sacrificial system, under the law, was not only intended to awaken in the heart of man a consciousness of sin, but also to open a way of forgiveness.

The Lord Jesus Christ has revealed the perfect Way of Forgiveness. He is Himself the living Way, and he has taught us to pray in particular for the forgiveness of our sins. The act of forgiveness, and the certainty attached to it, is all closely identified with Christ. As Martensen wisely points out, if it rested upon our sanctification,

we should be in a continual state of uncertainty. 'My best actions require forgiveness,' and this fact led him to the Pauline position, restated in Luther's great principle of justification by faith in Christ alone, for 'Good deeds do not make a man pious, but a pious man does good deeds'.

The great Lange has well remarked that the whole of Christianity is found in one sentence, 'To Him give all the prophets witness, that through His Name whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins' (Acts x. 43). The clearest testimony is here given to the fact that faith in Christ, the only Saviour, Mediator, and Reconciler, is the direct, and indeed the only way of forgiveness and of salvation, of which it is the great central principle.

The great need of our humanity is thus met by the Gospel of God's grace, and of forgiving love. The merciful provision for sin is all in Jesus Christ, 'in whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins.'

God does forgive, graciously, willingly, but still in accordance with His own plan of salvation, through repentance and faith. The moral principle is upheld, while salvation is placed within the reach of all.

We are told in these days that we are under the dominion of fixed moral laws as inexorable and immovable as those of the physical universe. In a word, he who breaks a law must take the consequences. Forgiveness there is none. It is a hard saying, but faith in God saves us from the misery of such an opinion, which limits the power of the Almighty.

Another belief which has gained currency is that man needs no forgiveness, or if he does, that he can forgive himself. This view sets aside the whole work of redemp-

tion, forgets that it cost more to redeem souls than they imagine, and makes the suffering and death of Christ a hopeless enigma.

There are many, again, who believe that God is so good and merciful, that He forgives universally. He is so kind and loving, it is argued, that He forgives freely of His own accord, apart from all considerations. But this view derogates from every proper idea of God. It does despite to His moral character; it sacrifices God's justice and holiness, and weakens our thought of God to a Being of easy-going good nature. The criminal would count a human judge very merciful if he allowed him to escape well-merited punishment, but every right thinking man would realize that a great wrong had been done, and untold evil wrought in the life of the community, by a lowering of the ideals of justice, and a confusion of thought in regard to the eternal distinctions of right and wrong.

The Gospel is the answer to every partial and unfair view of God and His dealings with men. There is forgiveness with God, but it is in His own appointed way. And in this, as our Homily of Salvation so succinctly states, 'with His endless mercy He joined His most upright and equal justice.'

The Epistle (2 Cor. iii. 4–10) furnishes the thought of entire confidence in God, in whom alone is our sufficiency. It lays great stress upon the necessity of remembering that in the Christian life the spiritual is all-important; that our holy religion is marked throughout by spirituality. 'The spirit giveth life.'

The Gospel (Mark vii. 31) has given a name to the Sunday, Ephphatha Sunday. It is the miracle of the healing of the deaf man, with the impediment in his

speech. Our Lord's divine power is in strong evidence. We need to remember as well His spiritual power, by which the morally deaf hear the Word of God and the dumb lips learn to sing His praise.

The Old Testament Lessons (1 Kings xxii. 1–41; 2 Kings ii. 1–16; or iv. 8–38) tell the story of the closing scenes of the life of Ahab, show us Elijah in his glorious translation, and introduce us to Elisha at the beginning of his ministry. The faithfulness of God is thus illustrated in a most remarkable way.

THIRTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

The Collect

ALMIGHTY and merciful God, of whose only gift it cometh that thy faithful people do unto thee true and laudable service; Grant, we beseech thee, that we may so faithfully serve thee in this life, that we fail not finally to attain thy heavenly promises; through the merits of Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

They also serve who only stand and wait.—MILTON.

As ever in my great Taskmaster's eye.—MILTON.

Small service is true service while it lasts.
WORDSWORTH.

Get leave to work
In this world, 'tis the best you get at all;
For God in cursing, gives us better gifts
Than man in benediction.—E. B. BROWNING.

Our duty down here is to do, not to know;—
Live as though life were earnest, and life will be so!
LYTTON.

Faith's meanest deed more favour bears,
Where hearts and wills are weigh'd,
Than brightest transports, choicest prayers,
Which bloom their hour and fade.—J. H. NEWMAN.

THE Life of Service is the life worth living. It is the life to which God calls us all, 'Whose we are, and Whom we ought to serve.' It is for this that we are saved, to love and serve.

There is a question which is constantly crying for solution: 'What is the purpose of our life, the supreme object of our being?' It cannot be to pass our time in aimless indolence, or in pleasure seeking. Nor can it be the existence which is measured by eating and drinking, and sleeping and waking, and living and working for the things of time.

It is rather to live a life of trust which leads to obedience, which fills the hours and days with loving service. The motto of the Prince of Wales—won on the fateful field of Crecy, when King John of Bohemia, who had borne it, fell—'Ich dien' ('I serve'), should be the life motto of every child of God.

In the world in which we live we must choose one of the two services which lie open to us. The Lord Jesus showed that we cannot remain neutral, when he laid down the principle, 'No man can serve two masters'; and St. Paul tells us, 'his servants ye are whom ye obey.'

'Ye were the servants of sin,' St. Paul writes to the Romans, as he defines in a sentence their previous condition. And this is a state of slavery. As King James II said to his son on his death-bed, 'There is no slavery like the slavery of sin, and no liberty like God's service.' And this has been proved by thousands, in a thousand

ways. Alexander conquered the world, but was conquered by one vice, that of intemperance. Judas, the base Judaean, for a few pieces of silver, the price of a slave, 'threw a pearl away richer than all his tribe.' Solomon, in all his wisdom, suffered his heart to be won from God, and became a slave of passion. Demas forsook that service which is perfect freedom, for the slavery of the world. The result has been ever the same as Cardinal Wolsey confessed:

> Had I but served my God with half the zeal
> I served my king, He would not in mine age
> Have left me naked to mine enemies.

It has been the same experience in all the ages. St. Paul asked the Romans, What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death. The present gain, if there be any, ends in future loss. And the loss is often, as in the case of the drunkard, present and complete.

The characteristics of true service should be kept in mind. The first is, implicit obedience. A disobedient servant is often useless, or worse indeed, often dangerous.

Then obedience should be from the heart. In the spiritual life the motive is really everything. Unless there is love, the service will be poor and unprofitable. The mere outward professor of religion, who yields a seeming obedience, but in whose heart there is no spirit of love, cannot really serve. What must God, therefore, think of the cold and formal religionist, whose motive may be merely display? The only service that counts is that in which love has its place, and which constantly gives fresh proof of its reality by self-sacrifice.

The service of God should be whole-hearted. It should

cover not one part of life alone, as if we could make divisions in it, but all. Our time, our talents, our means, our energies, should all be placed at the feet of our Master. We sometimes forget that the secular side of life belongs to God as well as the spiritual.

It is a reasonable service commanding our rational faculties. And it is a happy service, in fact the only true happiness is found in it.

The power in which we are to serve is that of the Holy Spirit. The way of service is in following Christ, 'I am among you as He that serveth.' 'If any man serve Me, let him follow Me.' The reward is glorious, 'where I am, there shall also My servant be.'

The Epistle (Gal. iii. 16–23) is a brief history of God's promise, given to Abraham and his seed, and perfectly fulfilled in Christ. It is all of grace, by faith given to them that believe.

The Gospel (Luke x. 23–38) is Christ's marvellous illustration of love exemplified in neighbourliness, as shown in the parable of the man who fell among the thieves and was succoured by the Good Samaritan.

The Old Testament Lessons (2 Kings v.; 2 Kings vi. 1–24; or vii.) furnish the story of the ministry of Elisha, and tell first God's mercy to Naaman the Syrian, and then of the discomfiture of the Syrians, and of the feeding of the Israelites when sorely distressed by want. The true service of Elisha is thus honoured by God.

FOURTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

The Collect

ALMIGHTY and everlasting God, give unto us the increase of faith, hope, and charity; and, that we may obtain that which thou dost promise, make us to love that which thou dost command; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Faith is the sun of life, and her countenance shines like the Hebrew's,
For she has looked upon God.—LONGFELLOW.

What then is Hope?—a Faith that dares to move!
And what is Faith?—the happy rest of Love.
AUBREY DE VERE.

Hope, Child! To-morrow hope, and then again to-morrow,
And then to-morrow still! Trust in a future day,
Hope, and each morn the skies new light from dawn shall borrow;
As God is there to bless let us be there to pray.
VICTOR HUGO.

Faith and hope and love we see,
Joining hand in hand agree;
But the greatest of the three,
And the best, is love.
CHRISTOPHER WORDSWORTH.

THE cry of the heart to-day, as voiced in prayer, is for the permanent presence of the triad of Christian graces—Faith, Hope, and Charity. The Apostles said unto the Lord, increase our faith. St. Paul prayed for the Romans, 'that ye may abound in hope,' and for the Philippians, 'I pray that your love may abound yet more and more.'

Faith is trust. It is the confiding reliance of the heart. It is heart-belief in a person. Faith is the faculty which

realizes the invisible. It is by faith we believe in God, are joined to Christ, live the spiritual life, overcome the world. Faith is the blessed secret of success in prayer, of power in service, of patience in trial, of fruitfulness in life, and of victory in death.

> 'I do believe! help Thou my unbelief!'
> Is the last greatest utterance of the soul.

Faith is the foundation principle of Christianity. It is the uniting link between man and God. In its origin it is the gift of God, in its operation it is the work of the Holy Spirit, in its object it looks to Christ, and clings to Him.

Hope is a desire for good, coupled with expectancy. It is akin to trust, in that it has also the spirit of confidence. The root is found in the old Anglo-Saxon and means to open the eyes wide, and to look for what is to come. Hope is the mainspring of life. It gives colour to every spiritual conception. It is a necessary element in religious experience. Indeed, it is the saving salt of our earthly pilgrimage. It 'springs eternal in the human breast'. There is an old saying, 'While there is life, there is hope.' The world's highest motto, as St. Bernard said, is *Dum spiro spero* (Whilst I breathe I hope); but the Christian may add *Dum expiro spero* (Whilst I expire I hope).

The figure St. Paul uses of the helmet of salvation is Hope protecting the head, the centre of the intellectual powers. As the shield of faith protects the heart, so the helmet of hope guards the mind. This is very suggestive, for unless hope inspires the mind, there is no courage, no largeness of view, no high purpose or great endeavour. As Dr. Johnson pointed out, our powers owe much of their energy to hope.

But hope is an anchor as well. It is a star to guide, a helmet to protect, an anchor to hold. And Christ Himself is the anchor of the soul. In the world of action, the sailor drops the anchor into the deep, so that his ship may ride in safety. The Christian's anchor is within the veil, Christ has entered into the heavens and all our hope is there. That anchor holds.

Then there is Love, or Charity, as the old translation runs. In Wycliffe's day, and for many years later, love and charity were synonymous. But the old use, natural enough from its origin, *carus* = dear, has probably gone for ever. In its original use, Charity meant the very highest possible form of love for God or man, but now it is so restricted as to cover almsgiving, or a kind construction placed upon an act. Its meaning is not even as wide as benevolence. Love is of God, for 'God is Love'. Love is the highest good, for it is the manifestation of the life of God. Every virtue flows, as St. Augustine showed, from love. Temperance is love, keeping itself pure. Fortitude is love, readily enduring all things. Peace is love reclining. Long-suffering is love bearing.

Dean Stanley gave utterance not only to a beautiful sentiment, but laid down a true principle, when he said: 'Faith founded the Church: Hope has sustained it: I cannot help thinking that it is reserved for Love to reform it.'

God is in the hand of faith, He is in the eye of hope and He is in the heart of love.

These three gifts are attainable. They are from God, and are bound up with the promise of Christ, 'He that seeketh findeth.'

The Epistle (Gal. v. 16–25) is St. Paul's remarkable

contrast between the works of the flesh and the fruit of the Spirit. Its lesson is plain, every good gift is from God, who through His Spirit produces the fruit of Christ's life in our souls.

The Gospel (Luke xvii. 11–20) is the cleansing of the Ten Lepers by Christ, with its suggestive lesson of the duty of thankfulness or gratitude.

The Old Testament Lessons are 2 Kings ix.; x. 1–32; or xiii., with their wonderful fulfilment of prophecy; displaying at once long-suffering love, patient waiting, and yet certain judgement.

FIFTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

The Collect

KEEP, we beseech thee, O Lord, thy Church with thy perpetual mercy: and, because the frailty of man without thee cannot but fall, keep us ever by thy help from all things hurtful, and lead us to all things profitable to our salvation; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

God, being so great, great gifts most willingly imparts;
But we continue poor that have such narrow hearts.

ABP. TRENCH.

Christ's faith makes but one body of all souls,
And Love 's that Body's Soul.—CRASHAW.

THE need of God's continual keeping finds expression to-day. The Church of God in faith looks up to its Divine Master, knowing that His promise will be kept, 'Lo I am with you alway even unto the end of the world.' So the Lord Jesus prayed, while He was in the flesh, 'Holy Father, keep through Thine own Name, those whom Thou hast given Me.' And the prophet

Isaiah had long before foretold God's gracious purpose to His Church, 'I the Lord do keep it.' The speaker is God Himself, 'I, Jehovah, its guardian.' 'I will water it every moment . . . I will keep it day and night.'

The frailty of man is a continual source of danger to the Church of Christ. We meekly confess, without Thee, it cannot but fall. The need is constant to remember the apostolic injunction, 'Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.' But when we know the secret of weakness, and in humility and faith look away to Christ, the source of all grace, then the promise is fulfilled, 'My strength is made perfect in weakness.'

There are dangers from without, as well as from within. The Church through all the ages has had to face persecution. The powers of earth at first were arrayed against it, and physical force was called into play to destroy it. It looked at one time as if in its very infancy its life would be quenched in blood. Then it has had to face the force of intellectual attack, from age to age, well illustrated by the fierce war against it by Voltaire, who declared, 'it took twelve men to set up Christianity in the world; I will show that it needs but one man to destroy it.' But as the weakness of man was met by God's grace, so the wrath of man had to face His Divine power. 'I the Lord do keep it.'

Our whole need, however, is not summed up in being kept, and so we look for further blessing. We ask for light and leading. We seek such things as are profitable to our salvation. And this is in the line of God's promise to His people through Isaiah, 'I am the Lord thy God which teacheth thee to profit, which leadeth thee by the way which thou shouldest go.' And Christ promised that the Holy Spirit should lead us into all the truth.

There is no vagueness in the thought, as Bishop Westcott pointed out; it is the truth in all its parts, 'into the complete understanding of and sympathy with that absolute Truth, which is Christ Himself.'

The Epistle (Gal. vi. 11) points to the true source of every blessing: Christ, and Him crucified.

The Gospel (Matt. vi. 24) teaches the principle of undivided service in the cause of Christ and His Church, assures us of God's gracious provision for our every need, and declares that when the Christian seeks first the Kingdom of God, and His righteousness, all other things will be added.

The Old Testament Lessons (2 Kings xviii., xix., or xxiii. to 31) describe Hezekiah's good reign, God's faithfulness to His servant, and Josiah's zeal for God and truth.

SIXTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

The Collect

O LORD, we beseech thee, let thy continual pity cleanse and defend thy Church; and, because it cannot continue in safety without thy succour, preserve it evermore by thy help and goodness; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

First for Himself the High Priest His offering makes;
This done, for others, for those nearest found,
The circle of the sacred Home—and then
For the whole Church of God.—ABP. TRENCH.

Nor yet
(Grave this within thy heart!) if spiritual things
Be lost through apathy, or scorn, or fear,
Shalt thou thy humbler franchises support,
However hardly won or justly dear:
What came from heaven to heaven by nature clings,
And if dissevered thence, its course is short.
WORDSWORTH.

THE Peace of the Church is the ruling thought to-day. Peace is such a rich and great blessing, that it ought ever to be desired, and constantly sought. It is indeed ' a consummation devoutly to be wished '.

God's presence and God's blessing constitute the truest Church defence. And so our prayer is, ' Let Thy continual pity cleanse and defend Thy Church.' This petition is in keeping with the divine revelation, for it is said of Christ that He sanctifies and cleanses it with the washing of water by the word, so that it should be without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, ' holy, and without blemish.'

The Peace which our Church teaches us to seek is not a false peace. It is not the state of those who cry ' peace ', ' peace ', when there is no ' peace '.

' It is false peace,' as Pascal wisely points out, ' to preserve peace at the expense of truth.' And he goes to the very root of the matter when he declares : ' As the only object of peace in the State is the safe preservation of the people's goods, so the only object of peace in the Church is to keep in security the truth which is her property, and the treasure upon which her heart is set.' There is a time when it is treason to the State to secure peace at the expense of her best interests. And it is virtually to betray the Church, ' when truth is assaulted by the enemies of the faith, when they would snatch it from the hearts of the faithful, and replace it by error,' and we do not come to her aid, and defend her as far as in us lies. It is for this reason, Pascal thinks, ' Jesus Christ, Who says that He is come to bring peace, says also that He is come to send war.'

The truest friends of the Church, those who have unselfishly sought her best interests, have often been

the most misunderstood. Athanasius, who stood for truth against the world, was opposed by many Bishops and Clergy, beset by enemies in Church and State, four times an exile, condemned more than once by the councils of the Church, hated, reviled, persecuted, called by vile names as a disturber of the Church's peace ; and yet all the time he was the friend of peace, because the teacher of truth, and under God one of His greatest instruments for the preservation of the faith.

The peace, which is true and lasting, is peace with honour. It is like the Divine wisdom, first pure, then peaceable. It is founded upon truth, seeks righteousness alone, promotes true unity of spirit, in the bonds of love.

The Epistle (Eph. iii. 13) shows that Christ is the centre of all unity, and that He gains the desired end, through the power of love.

The Gospel (Luke vii. 11–18) is the touching story of the raising to life of the widow's son at Nain, with its helpful inference of the tenderness and power of Christ.

The Old Testament Lessons (2 Chron. xxxvi.; Neh. i. and ii. to 9; or viii.) tell the sad story of Israel's disobedience, exile, the destruction of Jerusalem, and of God's leading of His people back again to their own loved land. The chastening hand was a hand of love, and although the lessons of the Captivity were learned in a hard school, they were fruitful in results upon the national life, and in the spiritual training of God's people in the Church of the Old Covenant.

SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

The Collect

LORD, we pray thee that thy grace may always prevent and follow us, and make us continually to be given to all good works; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

The trivial round, the common task,
Will furnish all we ought to ask;
Room to deny ourselves; a road
To bring us, daily, nearer God.—JOHN KEBLE.

A servant with this clause
Makes drudgery divine;
Who sweeps a room as for Thy laws
Makes that and th' action fine.

GEORGE HERBERT.

THE life of Grace, which issues in a life of fruitfulness in Good Works, is the blessing which the Christian is moved to seek to-day.

Prevenient Grace is first sought, the grace that goes before, or, as it has been beautifully called, 'Loving Forethought,' that lays up saving help against the hour of trial. The emphatic place given to grace is intended to make us feel that without the grace of God we can do nothing. 'Without Me,' said Christ, 'ye can do nothing.' The leading idea of grace is the free and undeserved mercy and favour of God towards sinners through Jesus Christ. But it also conveys the thought of power, of supporting strength, of help furnished in time of need. And this God gives, through His Holy Spirit. The Collect pleads for an atmosphere of grace,

preceding us, and following us, Christ everywhere as in St. Patrick's Breast-plate :

Christ be with me, Christ within me,
Christ behind me, Christ before me,
Christ beside me, Christ to win me,
Christ to comfort and restore me,
Christ beneath me, Christ above me,
Christ in quiet, Christ in danger,
Christ in hearts of all that love me,
Christ in mouth of friend and stranger.

St. Paul has no sooner shown that we are saved by grace through faith, than he goes on to declare that we are 'created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.' Luther caught St. Paul's meaning, and saw the divine method, when he said, 'Good works do not make a Christian, but one must be a Christian to do good works. The tree bringeth forth the fruit, not the fruit the tree.' The Good Works are the result of grace, the fruit of faith, the children of love. We are created for them, they are prepared for us. They are closely connected with the supreme purpose of our being. Just as the bird is formed to fly, or the fish to swim, so were we made to walk in service, and to work for God.

Good Works : the term is grandly inclusive. They are good because they are inspired of God. They are works, in that they are in the line of service for God and man. One might make a long list of works of charity, of kindness, of benevolence, of self-sacrifice, of piety, but it is enough to say that every work is good that springs from faith, is born of love, and is along the line of blessing. The common actions of the common day, done in the spirit of faith and in loving obedience are ennobled by

this principle. And it is creed thus translated into conduct that is the best witness of the truth of Christianity, and which becomes an attractive force winning men to Christ.

The Epistle (Eph. iv. 1–7) is a call from St. Paul to Christians to walk worthy of their high vocation, and to remember the unity of the Church, which is Christ's body.

The Gospel (Luke xiv. 1–12) shows the lawfulness of works of charity and mercy on the Sabbath day, and teaches as well the great lesson of humility.

The Old Testament Lessons (Jer. v., xxii., or xxxv.) picture God searching His people, and looking for the true spirit of service, exhorting them to repentance, and setting the seal of approval upon the principle of obedience.

EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

The Collect

LORD, we beseech thee, grant thy people grace to withstand the temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil, and with pure hearts and minds to follow thee the only God; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Tempted oft to go astray,
Jesu Christ, be Thou my way.—MONSELL.

Against me earth and hell combine;
But on my side is power divine;
Jesus is all, and He is mine.—JOHN NEWTON.

GRACE to meet and withstand Temptation is the ruling thought to-day. The full sweep of temptation is kept in view, 'the temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil.'

The temptations of the World are many and dangerous. They come to us in so many disguises that they would deceive the very elect. They are very insidious, and although every age has its own dangers, yet our own, on account of the prevailing spirit of materialism, has to face as serious ones as ever fell to the lot of man.

The spiritually-minded and deeply-taught Weiss has well remarked that ' The world threatens believers not only with its enmity, but evermore with its temptation '. And that ' Believers are in danger of seduction into the sin and falsehood of the world '. And the scholarly Lange points out how seductive is the love of the world, with its appeal to so many minds, fascinating one by this, and another by that, the gold of the earth, human wisdom, power, or dominion, even influence in less degree and more limited sphere. And it was a true insight which led F. W. Robertson to say that ' worldliness is a more decisive test of a man's spiritual state than even sin '. He reasoned that St. John draws a clear distinction when he says, ' If any man sin we have an advocate with the Father,' but ' if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him '.

The temptations of the Flesh are constantly in evidence. Pascal says, that ' the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life ' are three rivers of fire, which burn rather than refresh. St. Paul, in his warning against the sins, or works of the flesh, while he does not exhaust the fearful catalogue, yet names seventeen distinct sins, which cover at least four clearly defined classes. There is Sensuality, comprising adultery, fornication, uncleanness, wantonness; Idolatry, both open and secret; Malice, covering hatred, strife, wrath, and murder; and Intemperance, including every form of drunkenness

and dissipation. Temptations come, said Dr. Guthrie, like a roaring sea-squall. Sometimes no doubt this is true, but they often come like a summer breeze, and woo us into sleep. We need ever to remember the Saviour's warning, 'Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation.'

The temptations of the Devil come to all. Even Christ was not exempt from them. This great and powerful spirit may appear even as an angel of light. He is able to 'blind the eyes of those who believe not'. He is full of all seductive subtlety, and fascinating falsity, and destructive deceit. In a word, he is the exact opposite to the Truth incarnate, the Lord Jesus Christ.

The temptations which beset us are many and terrible. The thought of them alone is dispiriting enough. And we know them, not only in the way of revelation, but by sad experience. It is well to know our own weakness and our danger. For, as St. Augustine tells us, there is in every man a Serpent, an Eve, and an Adam. Our animal nature is the Serpent, concupiscence is the Eve, and the Adam is reason. The serpent may tempt, Eve may covet, but unless reason gives consent, sin is not finished. The saintly Rutherford felt that to live without temptation would be the greatest temptation out of hell, and that at worst the devil is but God's master-fencer, to teach us to handle our weapons.

Temptation is strong, but grace is stronger. Satan is powerful, but Christ has all power in heaven and earth. The Stronger than the strong comes to the aid of His people in answer to their cry. Jesus has vanquished Satan, and is the great Captain of our Salvation. He puts a weapon in our hands, even the Sword of the Spirit,

with which to meet every enemy of our souls. He leads us in the way of truth, the path of peace; 'walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh.' He whispers to us to be of good courage, and not to fear, that 'greater is He that is in us, than he that is in the world'.

The Epistle (1 Cor. i. 4–9) is a thanksgiving to God for grace by which the soul is enriched.

The Gospel (Matt. xxii. 34) is the great Commandment of Love, with the searching question, 'What think ye of Christ?'

The Old Testament Lessons (Jer. xxxvi.; Ezek. ii.; or xiii. 1–17) contain the story of Jeremiah's threatening prophecies, and the foolish action of Jehoiakim the king in attempting to destroy them; Ezekiel's call and commission, and his warning against false prophets and lying prophecies.

NINETEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

The Collect

O God, forasmuch as without thee we are not able to please thee; Mercifully grant, that thy Holy Spirit may in all things direct and rule our hearts; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

There 's a divinity that shapes our ends,
Rough-hew them how we will.—Shakespeare.

Holy Spirit, faithful Guide,
Ever near the Christian's side,
Ever present truest Friend,
Ever near Thine aid to lend.—M. M. Wells.

THE light and leading of the Holy Spirit is the one theme to-day. It is voiced in the prayer that He may 'direct and rule our hearts', as from the central citadel, the Holy Spirit controlling the whole life.

We confess, in the spirit of deepest humility, that in ourselves we are not able to please God, but we remember the words of Christ, 'My grace is sufficient for thee.' And we know that the Holy Spirit is willing to enable us for every duty in life.

The Christian life is nearest its great ideal when it is most like Christ, walking by faith, and leaning only upon the power and wisdom of the Spirit of God.

St. Paul thus prayed, 'The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ.' The inspired petition of the Apostle, to the Lord the Spirit, that the hearts of men may be drawn into the love of the Father, and led into the patience of Christ, sums up all Christian need. There can be no higher prayer, for it covers all life. The Trinity of Love, and Light, and Power, God-blessed for ever, is asked to fulfil His holy purposes in our lives.

The Holy Spirit is our Guide. He directs in His wisdom the believing soul. In the Old Testament artistic skill was especially ascribed to the Spirit, and His leading was constantly recognized. The Psalmist's prayer was, 'Let Thy loving Spirit lead me'. In the New Testament there is a direct and personal outpouring of the Holy Spirit, according to Christ's true promise. He is the direct Author of Faith, 'the Spirit of faith'; the Giver of Life; the Strengthener of God's people; the abiding Presence in the Christian's life; His constant Guide, and his unchanging Friend, and Counsellor.

The Holy Spirit directs and rules the heart by His personal influence exercised upon the life. He leads God's sons (Rom. viii. 14). He teaches God's people the deep things of God (1 Cor. ii. 10). He directs the judgement, so that the true may be discerned from the false (1 John ii. 27). He assists us in our need, 'Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities' (Rom. viii. 26).

The leading of the Holy Spirit, in His directing and controlling power, depends upon our faith. We must put our whole trust in Christ, and surrender ourselves to Him, so that the Holy Spirit may 'direct and rule' our hearts. This indeed is the thought of the Collect for the day, self-surrender to the whole will of God concerning us.

The Epistle (Eph. iv. 17) contrasts the new life of the Spirit with the old life of the flesh, and is a clear call to Christians to walk in the Spirit.

The Gospel (Matt. ix. 1) is the miracle of the healing of the man sick with the palsy, showing the ability of Christ to read the thoughts and discern the spirit, and His power not only to heal the sick, but to forgive sins.

The Old Testament Lessons (Ezek. xiv., xviii, or xxiv. 15) are a warning against idolatry, an exhortation to repentance; a justification of God's ways to men, and the parable of Ezekiel's action in not mourning for his wife, a special sign given to Israel.

TWENTIETH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

The Collect

O ALMIGHTY and most merciful God, of thy bountiful goodness keep us, we beseech thee, from all things that may hurt us; that we, being ready both in body and soul, may cheerfully accomplish those things that thou wouldest have done; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

What my soul was thy errand here?
Was it mirth or ease,
Or heaping up dust from year to year?
Nay, none of these!
Speak soul aright in His holy sight,
Whose eye looks still
And steadily on thee through the night:
To do His will!

THE Christian should hold himself in constant readiness to do God's will. He is a soldier engaged in a great campaign, and he needs to be prepared for the warfare in which his life is to be spent. He is not called upon to provide armament, to build barracks, to prepare food and clothing, to pay for fortifications, and to arrange for shelter. In the affairs of this life, this is the work of the government. The King provides for his soldiers. And the soldier of the Cross finds that the great Captain of his salvation has made abundant provision for his every need; he has but to use the armour of the soul, the weapons of the spiritual warfare, and to fight the good fight of faith, cheerfully obeying the commands of Christ.

The Christian is bought with a price, he has been

redeemed, and he is called upon to glorify God in his body, and in his spirit, which are God's. So St. Paul calls upon the Roman converts to yield themselves unto God, and their members as weapons of righteousness unto God. But it is a willing enlistment under the banner of the King. There is no forced service. And it is the whole life, 'body and soul.' Ananias gave part of his goods, but not himself. The Macedonians first gave their own selves, and then their substance. And he who is ready, through grace, 'both in body and soul,' yields his life, his all, his means, his time, his talents, his influence to God.

The call to service comes from God Himself, 'Ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.' And all that we do, for God and man, in the service of Christ, should be done, not of constraint, but willingly, *con amore*, a spirit for which we ask in the prayer, that we may 'cheerfully accomplish those things that Thou wouldest have done'. It is the willing mind, the ready heart, that leads us to run in the way of God's commandments. 'Whatsoever ye do,' said the apostle, 'do it heartily, as to the Lord.'

There is no work to which God calls us for which He does not provide the necessary grace, strength sufficient for the day, and His protecting love while we are engaged in it. When He calls to service, He enables for duty.

The Epistle (Eph. v. 15–22) calls us to a careful Christian walk, in which we are to buy up the opportunity, and seek to fulfil the will of Christ. For all this there are needed rich spiritual gifts, which God stands ready to provide, else the words would be without significance, 'Be filled with the Spirit.'

The Gospel (Matt. xxii. 1–15) is the Parable of the

Marriage of the King's Son, which, while it magnifies the grace of God and shows us our rich privileges, contains a clear call to duty based upon responsibility.

The Old Testament Lessons (Ezek. xxxiv.; xxxvii; or Dan. i.) are full of the thought of God's keeping power, as the Shepherd of His people, as the Life-giver raising them up from death, as their protector in every fiery trial; at the same time, they speak with no uncertain voice of the believer's duty, in the light of so great spiritual privilege, and in the service of so good a Master.

TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

The Collect

GRANT, we beseech thee, merciful Lord, to thy faithful people pardon and peace, that they may be cleansed from all their sins, and serve thee with a quiet mind; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Wash with Thy Blood my sins! thereto incline
More readily, the more my years require
Help, and Forgiveness speedy and entire!

MICHAEL ANGELO.

For with a gentle courage she doth strive
In thought and word and feeling so to live,
As to make Earth next Heaven!—LOWELL.

THE blessings of God's pardoning Grace, and of His rich gift of Peace, are sought to-day, so that in the power of that forgiveness, cleansed in the precious blood of Christ, His believing people may enter into that quietude of mind which is essential for the highest service, and is the secret of all true happiness.

The desire for Pardon is written on every heart. It is a universal instinct, as is witnessed everywhere by 'the cry of human need for God's sweet pity'. The consciousness of sin has laid its hand upon the human mind. The light of nature showed man his guilt. The voice of conscience has ever spoken clearly of the guilt, and given warning of the punishment of sin. Revelation has not only shown the attitude of God's mind towards sin and the sinner, but it has also declared the way of forgiveness, summed up in St. Paul's words in the synagogue at Antioch: 'through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins.' The first principle of Christianity is, that God has Himself provided through the vicarious and sacrificial death of His own Son Jesus Christ the method and means of pardon. God can thus be just, and yet the justifier of all that believe. The way of forgiveness is freely opened to all who in true penitent faith accept the salvation so graciously offered in Jesus Christ. The whole secret of pardon is in Jesus Christ, 'in whom,' as St. Paul declares, 'we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins.'

The distinction has sometimes been made, that forgiveness refers to the feelings of the person concerned, while pardon has reference to the consequences which naturally follow. But with God forgiveness and pardon walk hand in hand. When He forgives He restores the sinner to the Divine favour, and he remits the punishment due to his sin.

The 'sweetness of pardon'. How great it is? Charles Wesley, when he entered into its fullness, said to the good Moravian, Peter Bohler, 'I suppose I had better keep silent about it.' 'Oh no,' said the devout Moravian,

'if you had a thousand tongues, you should use them all for Jesus.' This became the aspiration of his heart, the master-passion of his life, and was well voiced in his splendid hymn :

> Oh for a thousand tongues to sing
> My great Redeemer's praise.

But God gives more than Pardon. He sheds abroad through His Holy Spirit in the forgiven soul His own sweet Peace. 'Therefore, being justified by faith, we have Peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.' The sin of our lives, the great mass of it, the hideous catalogue of evil, has all been cleansed, written off, made as nothing, in the great act of pardoning love by which God in His grace received us, forgave us freely, and imputed to us the spotless righteousness of Christ.

Christ is our Peace. 'He is our Peace.' 'The fruit of the Spirit . . . is Peace.' It is the special bequest of Christ to His believing people, 'My Peace I give unto you.' It belongs to the Christian. Once justified it is his by inherent right. There are many Christians who confess with sadness that they have no real and lasting peace. If so, they are not living up to their privileges. There is somewhere a root of unbelief. Or perhaps they have an altogether false conception of peace, and expect to be relieved from the active warfare of the Christian life. The Peace, it is to be remembered, is the Peace of Christ, it is Peace with God.

In the light of that Divine Pardon, with God's sweet Peace within, we are to live and Serve. This is the Christian's high privilege, and his clear duty. For to every Christian a talent is given, and a service marked out. This thought is constantly kept before our minds

in the petition of the Communion Office: 'We most humbly beseech Thee, O heavenly Father, so to assist us with Thy grace, that we may continue in that holy fellowship, and do all such good works as Thou hast prepared for us to walk in.'

The Epistle (Eph. vi. 10) is the Christian's Armoury, God's wonderful provision for the Christian in the warfare of life.

The Gospel (John iv. 46) tells the story of the healing of the nobleman's son, and the great faith shown by the father of the lad.

The Old Testament Lessons, for both morning and evening, are from the Book of the prophet Daniel (iii., iv., and v.), and show forth God's dealings with His people in their captivity, the true faith and constancy of His children in the midst of the great heathen world-powers of the time.

TWENTY-SECOND SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

The Collect

LORD, we beseech thee to keep thy household the Church in continual godliness; that through thy protection it may be free from all adversities, and devoutly given to serve thee in good works, to the glory of thy Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Christ's faith makes but one Body of all souls.—CRASHAW.

Yea, very vain
The greatest speed of all these souls of men!—
Unless they travel upward to the Throne
Where sittest Thou, the satisfying One,
With help for sins, and holy perfectings
For all requirements.—E. B. BROWNING.

Set on fire our heart's devotion
With the love of Thy dear name;
Till o'er every land and ocean
Lips and lives Thy cross proclaim.

SARAH G. STOCK.

THE prayers of God's people ascend to-day for the Church of Christ. It is the Household of God, and needs His constant care and guidance. We seek then, that it should be kept in 'continual godliness', that it should ever wear a character and display a life which is like that of the Father Himself.

We confess in the Creeds that we believe in the *Holy* Catholic Church. And we know that Christ loved the Church, and gave Himself for it, purifying it by the washing of water by the Word, that He might present it to Himself, a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing. The Church is called to a life of holiness: 'God hath called us with an holy calling,' and is animated by the Holy Spirit, by Whose indwelling power the life of the Church is sustained and extended.

The Church of God has ever been called upon to face the hot fires of persecution and opposition. She has shown again and again that God was with her, as she held forth the torch of truth in the darkness of the world, that Christ was her life, as she rose from conflict which threatened to bring about her destruction if not her death.

The Church exists for the glory of God. Its supreme purpose is that it may be devoutly given to serve Him in good works. Its work is missionary; it is sent to spread abroad the truth of Christ. Its good works are works of love and mercy, the carrying of the light of

the Gospel, and its healing power to the darkened and sin-sick souls of men.

It is only as a missionary Church, with a world-wide outlook, for 'the Field is the World', that the Church can ever fulfil her high destiny. But as such she is irresistible. When the Church ceases to be missionary, she ceases to be a true Church; even when she falters in her work she loses power. But with her mission before her mind, and with an honest effort to fulfil it, every barrier must give way. For who can withstand the Power of God? or who can hinder the Spirit of the Lord?

If the Church of Christ would only live in the spirit of the Collect for the day, her path would be a bright and shining one. It is the spirit of those who rely not upon man, nor upon material things, but on the grace of Christ, and the keeping power of God. There can be no such thing as failure, when the Church lifts up her heart in prayer, that she may be kept 'in continual godliness', relies entirely upon the Divine protection, and seeks to serve in good works.

The Epistle (Phil. i. 3) is St. Paul's prayer for his Philippian converts, that they may enjoy an abounding love, that they may live in all sincerity of life, and be filled with the fruits of righteousness.

The Gospel (Matt. xviii. 21) is Christ's answer to St. Peter's question in regard to forgiveness, stating the debt of the forgiven, and the spirit in which he should live—forgiven much, he should love much; and he should ever show the same spirit of forgiving love:

> We do pray for mercy;
> And that same prayer doth teach us all to render
> The deeds of mercy.

The Old Testament Lessons (Dan. vi., vii. 9, or xii.)

tell the story of Daniel's rise, service, and prophetic utterances, as he foretold the advent of Messiah, and God's purposes concerning His people throughout the ages.

TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

The Collect

O God, our refuge and strength, who art the author of all godliness; Be ready, we beseech thee, to hear the devout prayers of thy Church; and grant that those things which we ask faithfully we may obtain effectually; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

To prayer, repentance, and obedience due,
Though but endeavour'd with sincere intent,
Mine ear shall not be slow, mine eye not shut.

MILTON.

Thy prayer shall be fulfilled; but how?
His thoughts are not as thine.—F. R. HAVERGAL.

Grant us to keep at least a prompt desire,
Continual readiness for Prayer and Praise—
An altar heaped and waiting to take fire
With the least spark, and leap into a blaze.

ABP. TRENCH.

THE Christian is taught to live a life of perfect trust in God, who is 'our refuge and strength'. He is to look up to the All-Father, who is the source and secret of all good, 'the author of all godliness,' who has given up His son Jesus Christ, to be 'the author and finisher of our faith'. And He has graciously promised us that the prayer of faith shall be effectual.

Prayer of every kind, whether it be individual or social, if it is indeed to be effectual, must ever rest upon the promises of God.

There is first the great promise of the Lord Jesus, that 'Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them.'

What encouragement could possibly be greater than this? What greater incentive could be offered to Christian people to love the assembling of God's people in His house of prayer? What a complete answer the words offer to those who so constantly say that they can get as much good at home, or in the quiet of the woods, or by the lake-side, or on the shores of the sea, as at Church!

It is this great promise of the Christ which gives to the services of the Church their chief importance, which indicates the spiritual value of every meeting in the name of Christ, whether it be for missionary expansion, the study of the Bible, or for prayer and praise. Christ is there, He is in the midst of His worshipping people. It is related of a good woman, who once declared that she would be present at a certain service for prayer, if she were the only one who should come, when some one asked her in jest, afterwards, having heard that she was the only one at the service, 'How many were present?' that she replied, 'Four.' 'Why!' said he, 'I heard that you were there all alone.' 'No,' she said; 'I was the only one visible, but the Father was there, and the Son was there, and the Holy Ghost was there, and we were all agreed in prayer.'

And connected with the promised presence of Christ in the midst of His worshipping people, there is this distinct promise as well: 'That if two of you shall agree

on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of My Father which is in heaven.'

What a power, Christ declares, resides in the union of Christian hearts! The loving Saviour even condescends to make the number joined in the bonds of unity, two, the lowest possible. The ideal of the Church is a unity of hearts in full spiritual agreement, 'gathered together' in Christ's name, uniting in definite prayer to God. Such prayer is effectual. It carries with it the promise of Christ of a sure and certain answer.

Effectual prayer is bound up with the sure promise of Christ, and the faith of believing souls. There is perhaps nothing concerning which Jesus Christ spoke in terms of such absolute certainty as that of prayer. 'Ask and ye shall receive, seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you.' The answer is bound up with His own clear engagement to fulfil His promises. 'I myself will do it' (John xiv. 14). Godet thus paraphrases the words of the Lord Jesus: 'I, who have never deceived you, who shall be reinvested with omnipotence, and be with the Father, myself engage to do it.'

The New Testament record itself contains the best commentary on the power of united prayer. It is seen in that contest of the world power with the Church of God. Peter had been cast into prison, and all the strength of the Roman empire was arrayed against him. He was placed by Herod under the guard of four quaternions of soldiers, there were keepers immediately before the door, and Peter himself slept between two soldiers, bound with two chains. But on the other side there was the power of prayer. 'Prayer,' instant and earnest prayer, as the marginal reading runs, 'was made without ceasing of the Church unto God.' And God

delivered Peter from the hand of his enemies. The prayer was effectual.

The Epistle (Phil. iii. 17) is St. Paul's high call to heavenly citizenship, coupled with the promise of the full redemption of the body at Christ's second advent.

The Gospel (Matt. xxii. 15) is Christ's clear teaching as to the duties of citizenship, the rendering to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's.

The Old Testament Lessons (Hos. xiv ; Joel ii. 21 ; or iii. 9) are : the call of Hosea to repentance, which carried with it, on amendment, a promise of God's blessing ; the prophecy of Joel of God's judgements against His enemies, and of His rich blessings in store for His Church.

TWENTY-FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

The Collect

O Lord, we beseech thee, absolve thy people from their offences ; that through thy bountiful goodness we may all be delivered from the bands of those sins, which by our frailty we have committed : Grant this, O heavenly Father, for Jesus Christ's sake, our blessed Lord and Saviour. *Amen.*

Then, tho' our foul and limitless transgression
Grows with our growing, with our breath began,
Raise Thou the arms of endless Intercession,
Jesus ! divinest when Thou most art Man !

F. H. W. Myers.

Return, my son,
To thy Redeemer.—Died He not in love ?—
The sinless, the divine, the Son of God,—
Breathing Forgiveness 'midst all agonies.—F. HEMANS.

The Crown of Thorns, Hands pierced upon the tree,
The meek, benign, and lacerated Face,
To a sincere repentance promise grace,
To the sad soul give hope of pardon free.
MICHAEL ANGELO.

THE leading thought to-day is that of Absolution, the Remission of sins. We ask God to absolve His people from their offences, that is, to free them from sin, its power and punishment.

'The absolving power is the central secret of the Gospel,' so wrote F. W. Robertson. For the Gospel is a message of full and free and perfect forgiveness in Jesus Christ. It is a word of help and hope to a world of sinners, lost and ruined by the Fall. The forgiveness of sins is preached in His Name, 'and through His Name whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins.' And this is the promise of the new Covenant, 'Their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.'

This is no less than the foundation principle of Christianity. It is a pure Gospel truth, which is nowhere else found. It discovers to us the pathway of communion with God now, and points forward in the spirit of joyful expectancy to eternal enjoyment of God's love hereafter.

The way of forgiveness is through faith in Jesus Christ. It is an open way to all, the offer of forgiveness being universal in application, and only bounded by the willingness to believe: 'Whosoever believeth in Him.'

The seal of forgiveness is God's own Word. The heart rests upon His promise. It has the supreme assurance of faith.

The Gospel of Christ is never so faithfully, so fully, so effectually preached as in 'The Absolution, or Remission of Sins,' pronounced at the close of the General Confession, 'said of the whole Congregation after the Minister,' at Morning and Evening Prayer in the Church of England, wherever her scriptural service is used. As John Wesley used to say, 'whatever may be said in the pulpit, there is the finest of wheat at the Prayer Desk.'

The declaration is then made of the terms of Gospel forgiveness, on the part of a loving Father, 'who desireth not the death of a sinner, but rather that he may turn from his wickedness and live.' 'He pardoneth and absolveth all them that truly repent, and unfeignedly believe His holy Gospel.' And then humble prayer is offered, that God may grant us 'true repentance, and His Holy Spirit'.

Thus the forgiveness of sins and the renewing power of the Holy Spirit are offered 'without money and without price'. The 'ambassadors for Christ' declare on the sacred and solemn authority of Almighty God Himself, and in the Name of Christ, that every truly penitent and believing soul receives the perfect pardon of God. The judicious Hooker has most beautifully summed up the richness of the blessing: 'His purpose is never to call' sin 'to account, or to lay it to men's charge; the stain He washeth out by the sanctifying grace of His Spirit.'

The Epistle (Col. i. 3) is St. Paul's thanksgiving for his Colossian converts, for the grace given to them, and for the faith which had led them to use it in their Chris-

tian experience ; and his prayer that they may walk worthy of their Christian vocation.

The Gospel (Matt. ix. 18) is the account of the two miracles of the Lord Jesus :—the healing of the woman with the issue of blood, and the raising of Jairus's daughter, both closely connected with prayer, based on faith.

The Old Testament Lessons (Amos iii, v, or ix) are prophecies of God's judgements against Israel, calls to repentance, warnings against hypocrisy, and a rich promise of restoration to the Divine favour.

TWENTY-FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

The Collect

STIR up, we beseech thee, O Lord, the wills of thy faithful people ; that they, plenteously bringing forth the fruit of good works, may of thee be plenteously rewarded ; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Only add
Deeds to thy knowledge answerable ; add faith,
Add virtue, patience, temperance ; add love.

MILTON.

Not words alone it cost the Lord,
To purchase pardon for His own :
Nor will a soul by grace restored
Return the Saviour words alone.

With golden bells, the priestly vest,
And rich pomegranates bordered round,—
The need of Holiness expressed,
And called for fruit as well as sound.

WILLIAM COWPER.

THE Collect, Epistle, and Gospel for this Sunday are always used the Sunday next before Advent. When there are more Sundays between Trinity Sunday and Advent, the services of some of those Sundays which were omitted after the Epiphany are taken to supply any that may be wanting. The Twenty-fifth Sunday after Trinity is known as 'Awakening' Sunday on account of its proximity to Advent. It is also familiarly known as 'Stir Up' Sunday, and there are certain local customs associated with Christmas connected with it. The Collect breathes the very spirit of awakening: 'Wake, brethren, wake,' the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.

The Church of Christ is God's great spiritual workshop in the world of men. And Christians within the Church are called upon to stir each other up to love and good works. This is true religion, the ritual of the Christian life. This is practical Christianity.

There are many exhortations in the New Testament to Christians to maintain good works. But none to unbelievers, none to those who have not accepted Christ as their Saviour and Master. There is not a word to indicate that the sinner can gain salvation by works, while there is much to the contrary. But 'This is a faithful saying, . . . that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works.' So St. Paul most clearly taught.

We seek from God the necessary grace to serve Him, 'in such good works as He has prepared for us to walk in.' We are to 'work out our own salvation', but it is God who worketh in us 'both to will and to do'. Our hearts are naturally cold, our wills are weak, our purposes infirm; we need the all-powerful breath of the

Spirit of God to warm our being, to move us to good, to help us to serve.

The Fruit of Good Works—the very term is suggestive. They are living works, there must be life for fruit. They are the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ to the glory of God. They are the fruit of faith. As Selden so beautifully said, 'As the flower is before the fruit, so is faith before good works; so neither is the fruit before the flower, nor good works without faith.'

Truly there is a reward for the righteous. 'God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love.' While salvation is all of grace, and good works have no merit in themselves, God is a plenteous rewarder of His people. Even a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple is not without its reward. The service of Christ has its own blessing here upon earth, and its exceeding great recompense in the world to come. We may not see the result here, we may appear to lose it altogether, but the reward is sure, even as Calvin felt when he thought of his banishment from ungrateful Geneva: 'Most assuredly if I had but served man, this would have been a poor recompense; but it is my happiness that I have served Him who never fails to reward His servants to the full extent of His promise.'

The portion of Scripture appointed for the Epistle is taken from Jeremiah xviii. 5. It is a wonderful prophecy of the Coming of Christ, seen in His Royalty, springing from David's stock, and yet 'the Lord our Righteousness'.

The Gospel is from St. John vi. 5, the miracle of the feeding of the five thousand, with its great lesson of Christ's almighty power, His gracious sympathy, His heart of love.

The Old Testament Lessons for the Sunday before Advent are Eccles. xi and xii, Haggai ii to ver. 10, Malachi iii and iv, in the first the Preacher sums up the conclusion of the whole matter, and, turning from the vanity of life, points to God, the chief good, in whose commandments all duty centres. Then we are pointed to the Coming of Christ, the last prophets of the old covenant closing with the gracious promises of the rising of the Sun of Righteousness, Malachi especially, like one

Whose spirit-sharpened sight
Foreknows the advent of the light.

ST. ANDREW'S DAY

NOVEMBER 30

The Collect

ALMIGHTY God, who didst give such grace unto thy holy Apostle Saint Andrew, that he readily obeyed the calling of thy Son Jesus Christ, and followed him without delay; Grant unto us all, that we, being called by thy holy Word, may forthwith give up ourselves obediently to fulfil thy holy commandments; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Whilst Andrew, as a fisher, sought
From pinching want his life to free,
Christ called him, that he might be taught
A fisherman of men to be.
And no delay therein he made,
Nor questionèd his Lord's intent;
But quite forsaking all he had,
With him that callèd gladly went.

GEORGE WITHERS.

ST. ANDREW bears a beautiful and most suggestive name. It is Greek in its origin, *Andreas*, manliness, the characteristic of a true man, manly spirit. It covers all the traits and qualities which become a man. This was in the mind of our immortal Shakespeare when he put into the mouth of Mark Antony, in praise of Brutus, the memorable words :

> The elements
> So mixed in him that Nature might stand up
> And say to all the world, This was a man.

St. Andrew has long been made the patron saint of Scotland. It has often been wondered why St. Andrew was chosen, as he had no possible connexion with Scotland. Was it that this wise people, who well know the worth of a man, saw the man behind the saint, as the words of their own Burns would suggest ?

> The rank is but the guinea-stamp,
> The man's the gowd for a' that.

Russia has always honoured his name with peculiar honour, and has linked it with all that is noblest in their chivalry.

St. Andrew was the first missionary. It is eminently fitting, therefore, that the Church should choose as the Day of Intercession for Missions the eve of St. Andrew, or any day in the week in which the festival of St. Andrew falls. But best of all, most in keeping with his spirit and character, is the name given to the Brotherhood of Men in our beloved Church : the Brotherhood of St. Andrew, whose members endeavour to follow his example, when he led his brother to Christ.

The Gospel narrative furnishes us with but few details of the person and life of St. Andrew. But brief as the

story is, it is full of human interest, and throws a flood of light upon his character. He was a fisherman, gathering daily, with Simon Peter, his more famous brother, the harvest of the sea, from the blue waters of the lake of Galilee. He was an early follower of John the Baptist, the soul of the man answering to the great call of that Herald of the coming Day, to cast off by repentance the works of darkness, and to watch for the dawn of the Kingdom of Light.

Our first clear view of Andrew is at Bethabara, beyond Jordan, where John was baptizing. The note of time is not wanting, for it was the day following the Baptism of the Lord Jesus. The Baptist's cry must have been startling to the two disciples who heard it, when as he looked upon Jesus as He walked, he exclaimed, 'Behold the Lamb of God,' thus bearing witness on two successive days to the person and work of the world's Redeemer. How graphic is the Divine record: 'They followed Jesus.' It is a story of action, instant action. Andrew not only followed Jesus, but he sought his brother Simon straightway, bore faithful witness to the Christ, and 'brought him to Jesus'.

The results of that one act are only known to God, who alone can number the blessings that brother brought to the world, as a witness to Christ, and a preacher of the Gospel of the grace of God.

We see Andrew again when the difficulty arose in regard to satisfying the hunger of the multitude. A touch of faith seemed to mingle with his unbelief. For when Jesus asked, 'Whence shall we buy bread that these may eat?' he replied, 'There is a lad here that hath five barley loaves and two small fishes, but what are they among so many?' But

with those loaves and small fishes the vast multitude was fed.

Andrew appears for the third time when the Greeks came up to the feast with the longing in their hearts, 'We would see Jesus.' Philip, cautious and careful as he evidently was, laid the case before Andrew. But with Andrew there is no hesitation, he shows his character in an instant—'the Introductor,' as the Venerable Bede loved to call him—straight to the Master himself he goes. 'Andrew and Philip tell Jesus.'

Andrew teaches us many useful lessons. The great Bishop Ryle of Liverpool declared that it would be well for the Church of Christ if all believers were more like Andrew. And the mighty Calvin pronounced a woe upon us for our indolence if we do not endeavour, like Andrew, to make others partakers of the same grace after we have received enlightenment ourselves.

Andrew furnishes us with a lesson in Decision. He took at once the decisive step of following Jesus. He heard John speak, as he bore his testimony to Christ. Andrew 'followed Jesus'.

Andrew has been called the first home missionary. He was certainly so in a most literal and emphatic sense. He first findeth his own brother. He brought him to Jesus. There is no room in such matters of eternal moment for reticence or reserve. It is not a time for argument, but for witness-bearing: 'We have found the Messias.'

Andrew teaches us how to use our opportunities. He did not wait until he was ordained an apostle, he began at once. And he began where the work is hardest—in his own home, and with his own brother. He did not sigh for other fields to conquer, he reaped in the one where the gate opened to his hand.

Andrew well illustrates a truth often noticed, that the world does not know its greatest benefactors. Nor indeed does the Church for that matter. Peter far outshines his brother. The place of dignity and the name of highest renown has been allotted, as Cardinal Newman points out, to Peter, and yet, as Newman goes on to remark, Andrew was the means of bringing him to the knowledge of his Saviour. If there is priority in the Church, it belongs to Andrew. And, humanly speaking, Peter might have remained a humble fisherman of Galilee all his days if Andrew had not broken down that fence of reserve about spiritual things which encloses us all, and told his brother of the Christ.

Andrew proved the hold that his principles had upon his life, by the best evidence that man can give: he died for them. The uniform tradition is that he died a blessed martyr for Christ and His truth. It is said that he was crucified on an X-shaped cross—a *crux decussata*. It meant the acme of cruelty, the highest measure of pain. In his death, as in his life, he led men to Christ, showing his love for his Master, for whom he gladly suffered all things.

Andrew lived up to his great name, Andreas: manly. And this is our greatest need to-day. The world wants men; the Church needs true men; and we may reverently say, God wants manly men. This is universally recognized. But it is sometimes forgotten that the highest manliness is only found in following Christ. This supreme need will never be met until, in the spirit of the poet Holland, we seek such men from God Himself. He alone can give us men fashioned after the pattern of Jesus Christ:

God! Give us men! A time like this demands
Strong minds, great hearts, true faith, and ready hands.

And Bishop Bickersteth voiced the same great need :

Give us men . . .
Not angelic, nobly human,
Very men of flesh and blood,
Yet of heaven's own brotherhood,
Men of God ;
Give us men, I say again,
Give us men.

ST. THOMAS THE APOSTLE

DECEMBER 21

The Collect

ALMIGHTY and everliving God, who for the more confirmation of the faith didst suffer thy holy Apostle Thomas to be doubtful in thy Son's resurrection ; Grant us so perfectly, and without all doubt, to believe in thy Son Jesus Christ, that our faith in thy sight may never be reproved. Hear us, O Lord, through the same Jesus Christ, to whom, with thee and the Holy Ghost, be all honour and glory, now and for evermore. *Amen.*

He saw Thee risen ; at once he rose
To full belief's unclouded height ;
And still through his confession flows
To Christian souls Thy life and light.

CANON BRIGHT.

THERE are few characters in Scripture who furnish more instruction to the devout student, than that of Thomas. He passed from darkness unto light, in more senses than one. It takes but little imagination to see him climb, as by steps of a ladder, from doubt, and mistrust, and incredulity, up to light and faith that should never afterwards know eclipse.

He is no longer 'doubting Thomas' to the Church of God, but a great spiritual hero, a man of faith. And it is faith that we all want, faith that saves, faith that animates, faith that aspires, faith that nerves the soul, faith that clings, faith that believes, faith that overcomes, faith that triumphs. It is the men of faith that are the men of purpose, the men of action, the men of power. It is doubt that darkens the pathway of life, that drags us down to lower levels, that paralyses the arm of action, that causes us to miss our opportunities, that everywhere destroys instead of building up.

The different appearances of our Lord Jesus Christ after His resurrection from the dead are all deeply significant. He showed Himself alive after His passion to many different persons, on many different occasions, and in many different places. One of the most interesting and instructive was to His disciples when Thomas was with them, eight days after His resurrection. On the first glad Easter Day Jesus had not left His chosen followers in suspense, but in the evening of that day appeared to His disciples, who were gathered with close-barred doors for fear of the Jews. 'Jesus came and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. And when He had so said He showed unto them His hands and His side.'

But Thomas was not with them when Jesus came. His absence has been traced to unbelief. It seemed to one who had seen Jesus captured by the soldiers, who had viewed from afar Jesus nailed to the cruel cross, who had witnessed His burial in the rock-sealed tomb, who had watched the Roman guard as they stood sentinels around the grave, a sort of madness to believe that the helpless victim who had perished at the hands of His enemies was alive again. The frail bark of his life had

set out upon the smiling sea of the early popularity of Jesus, but, when it encountered the fierce storm of enmity, hatred, and opposition which fell upon his great Master, the ship, freighted with such glorious hopes, driven against the rock of Calvary, was wrecked and had almost gone to pieces. Or perhaps his natural temperament had led him to despondency, and even as Southey long afterwards said, as he faced a great calamity which had broken the very heart-strings of his life : ' I will not be taken in again ; I will not love any more.'

But, whatever the cause, the absence of Thomas is fruitful in lessons for us. He stands in God's Word as an example and a warning of the spiritual loss sustained by those who absent themselves from the assembly of God's people. His separation from his fellow disciples added to his gloomy fears, and fear led him to the regions of doubt, which borders close upon unbelief. While his brethren were rejoicing in the light of resurrection truth his mind was in a state of suspense, if not, indeed, of despair.

He lost, too, the blessing of peace which Jesus had given, and retained instead the misery of doubt. He lost as well the sympathy and fellowship of believing hearts ; and, greatest of all, he was left from Easter to Pentecost without the great gift of the Holy Spirit, when Jesus breathed on them and said, ' Receive ye the Holy Ghost.' Thomas, through his despondency and doubt, was the last of the apostles to see and hear the risen Lord.

The character of Thomas is one of the most many-sided recorded in Scripture. He was called Didymus, which is the Greek for ' twin ', and that name gives a faithful description of the man himself. He possessed a sort of double nature. There were elements in his character, as with many a man, which were contradictory and would

not blend. He was naturally affectionate, his heart easily moved, rich in strong and yet tender love, but yet afraid to venture his all. He was ambitious, and yet given to fits of hopelessness. His faith in Christ and His mission was strong, but yet swept by winds of doubt and fears of delusion.

Thomas was of a melancholy temperament. He was subject to great depression of spirits. No doubt there were physical causes, and there are many examples in religious history (notably Melanchthon and Cowper) of men who have been at times depressed and cast down to a degree which made life almost unendurable.

Thomas was slow in judgement. He did not possess that quickness of intellectual perception which sees the heart of a matter in a glance, and reaches a conclusion in a single leap.

The apostle possessed a critical mind. There are none of the apostles so near to the modern spirit, or who had so much in common with the tendencies of the times in which we live. He was as impatient of the opinions of others as any thinker of the nineteenth century, and just as ready to appeal to the evidence of the senses. This habit of mind furnishes a strong argument for the credibility of the Gospel narrative. It shows that there was no collusion amongst the apostles, that they were not credulous men, easily imposed upon and deceived. Thomas was extremely cautious in forming his opinions. They were not formed hastily. He was sceptical in the best sense. The root idea of sceptical is to examine closely or critically. There is the thought in it of covering or shading the eyes in order to make a close scrutiny of an object, looking at it narrowly and intently, anxious not to be deceived in it.

He was a brave and courageous man. He was willing to face death when he thought that his Master was in danger. And this fact is not without its influence as a proof of the resurrection. He would have stood out against all the apostles unless absolutely convinced of the resurrection of Jesus as an objective fact.

Above all Thomas was a lover of truth, ready to follow it to its utmost conclusions. When his judgement was convinced, he was most sincere in his acceptance of the truth.

The doubt of Thomas was most decided in character. He would give no credence to the story of the resurrection unless it came within his own personal experience. 'Except I shall see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into His side, I will not believe.' He thought more of the sense of touch through his ten fingers than of the witness of his ten fellow disciples who had seen Jesus and had conversed with Him.

The unbelief of Thomas was intellectual rather than moral. He had no wish to doubt. His was not the unbelief which loves darkness because of evil deeds, or of a creed shaped by selfish desire rather than by a love of truth.

The apostle's unbelief was open to conviction. His prayer, like that of Ajax, was for light. His face was towards the light. He was not hostile nor indifferent. He was ready to believe on sufficient evidence. It may be that there was an element of faith in his unbelief, that he thought perhaps that Christ had risen in some sort of spiritual way, but that he refused to believe that it was with the same body that was crucified upon the cross.

God will not force belief, our faith must be spontaneous and real. What He desires is the child-like trust of children in a father's love. And so Jesus Christ, in a spirit of marvellous condescension, appeared to Thomas and offered the very proof that he sought. He showed to him His wound-prints, which were at once seals of His death, and marks by which His sacred person could be identified.

'Reach hither thy finger, and behold My hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into My side: and be not faithless, but believing.'

Then the faith of Thomas was seen. It was more than conviction, it was the highest kind of faith. Two conclusions took possession of his mind. The presence of Christ was a proof of His resurrection life; the words of Christ showed that his inmost thoughts were known and pointed to Christ's divinity. And so Thomas rose on the wings of faith to the great confession, 'My Lord and my God.' He made a personal appropriation of Christ to the needs of his own soul.

Christ allowed Thomas to address Him as God without reproof or prohibition. This is an indirect proof of His divinity, which is made the stronger by the action of Peter when Cornelius was ready to worship him, but was prevented by the statement of the apostle that he was but human, and by the action of Paul and Barnabas when they stopped the men of Lystra from offering them sacrifice.

The Christian's hope rests on the divinity of Christ which Thomas confessed, and the resurrection truth which he received and held is without question the great basal principle on which the Christian Church is reared.

THE CONVERSION OF ST. PAUL

JANUARY 25

The Collect

O GOD, who, through the preaching of the blessed Apostle Saint Paul, hast caused the light of the Gospel to shine throughout the world; Grant, we beseech thee, that we, having his wonderful conversion in remembrance, may shew forth our thankfulness unto thee for the same, by following the holy doctrine which he taught; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

The precious Vessel of our Master's choice,
Our golden lamp of truth, the starry flame
Whose radiant guidance through the depth of night
E'en to its setting led us toward the port
And coasts of promised glory still unseen.

BISHOP H. C. G. MOULE.

What nobler spoil was ever
Cast at the Victor's feet?
What wiser master-builder
E'er wrought at Thine employ
Than he, till now so furious
Thy building to destroy?

JOHN ELLERTON.

Yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.

Gal. ii. 20.

ST. PAUL the apostle was one of the greatest men that ever lived. It is not the language of exaggeration to say, that next to our Lord Jesus Christ, the God-Man, the world owes more to St. Paul in the way of spiritual teaching, than to any one who has ever

lived. The humblest of men, the bond-slave of Jesus Christ, as he loved to call himself, he was greatest in service to our humanity. It is to him that Christianity owes, humanly speaking, its Creed, its world-wide expansion, its spirituality, its freedom, and its brotherliness.

'Imagine,' says Adolphe Monod, 'the world without St. Paul: it would mean the detention of the Gospel, perhaps for centuries, on the borders of Asia. Imagine the Bible without St. Paul: it would mean Christian truth only half revealed, Christian life only half understood, Christian charity only half known, Christian faith only half victorious.'

The character of St. Paul is one of the most beautiful, if not indeed the noblest, in human history. He was richly endowed by nature, and highly trained by grace. In the human sphere he enjoyed all the advantages which could come from the largest measure of culture in his time: Roman citizenship, Grecian learning, and Hebrew religion. In the realm of the Spirit, his life was brought into complete subjection to the work of grace, in glad self-surrender to Christ, which can find no better expression than his own words: 'I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God.'

The leading characteristics of the apostle have been so beautifully portrayed by the master hand of Meyer, the commentator, that he almost lives and moves before the eye. St. Paul is pictured amidst his apostolic work, as one who had developed 'a force and play of spirit, a clearness, depth, and cogency of thought, a purity and firmness of purpose, an intensity of feeling, a holy

audacity of effort, a wisdom of deportment, a precision and delicacy of practical skill, a strength and liberty of faith, a fire and mastery of eloquence, a heroism in danger, a love, and self-forgetfulness, and patience, and humility, and altogether a sublime power and richness of endowment, which have secured for this chosen Implement of Christ the reverence and wonder of all time'.

The Conversion of St. Paul was always indissolubly associated in the mind of the apostle with the Risen Christ. In St. Paul's account of the resurrection, the longest and in every sense the most complete record in Scripture, he says, 'And last of all He was seen of me also.'

There are three accounts of St. Paul's Conversion and of the appearance to him of the Risen Christ. One account is from the pen of St. Luke, the others St. Paul himself gives. Saul (to use his circumcision-name) was at the height of his career of persecution of the infant Church of Christ. He was on his way to Damascus, armed with authority from the high priest, and ready to bind, and imprison, and persecute even to the death, all that followed 'the Way' of Christ. At midday Christ appeared to him in a light exceeding far the brightness of the sun. The appearance of the heavenly Visitor caused the company to fall to the ground in terror, struck them dumb with amazement, and filled them with fear. Then it was that Saul heard the voice of the Son of God speaking to his inmost soul, and yet in the loved Hebrew tongue, bearing still the name, 'Jesus of Nazareth,' the despised, rejected, mocked, and crucified Jesus, but now risen from the dead, and speaking from the realms of glory.

It was thus that Saul the persecutor was changed into Paul the apostle, by the vision and the call of the Christ. He was cast down in an instant from the height of self-righteousness to the depth of spiritual humility, as in trembling words he said, 'Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?' But what could he do now? For, blind from the excessive light of the bright vision, he must be led by others. And this was symbolic of his spiritual state. For he had now discovered his weakness, he had heard the voice of Jesus say, 'Arise,' he had in faith obeyed, and now he stood ready to serve. This was his conversion.

The next step was the reception of the gift of the Holy Spirit. For three days in his blindness, without tasting food or drink, he sounded the depths of spiritual experience, as he communed with God in prayer. Alone with God he evidently was, for the Christians were afraid of him, as the fiercest persecutor of the faith, and the Jews were now cut off from him by his action consequent upon the vision of Jesus.

The Risen Christ still filling his mind's eye, the Scriptures which foretold the sufferings and triumph of the Messiah now made clear, the words of Jesus still ringing in his ears, 'Why persecutest thou Me?' the three days of godly sorrow and true repentance might have been three centuries to Saul, as God was preparing him for His indwelling power.

Then Ananias, divinely led, sought him out, and 'putting his hands on him, said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, . . . hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost.' And the divine record runs that he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized.

The Conversion of St. Paul is a most remarkable evidence of the supernatural character of Christianity.

St. Paul ever declared that his call from God was direct, immediate, and personal. In the glorious light that he saw on the way to Damascus was the form of the crucified, but now risen and glorified Jesus, for in answer to his question, 'Who art Thou?' came the reply, 'I am Jesus.' His commission as Apostle of the Gentiles was from Christ Himself: 'I have appeared unto thee, to ordain thee a minister and a witness.'

St. Paul never for an instant doubted but that he had directly perceived the Risen Christ. 'Have I not seen Jesus Christ the Lord?' 'Last of all, He was seen of me also.' He claimed to be a witness of the resurrection, and to have received his call to the apostleship from the lips of Jesus Christ Himself.

The Conversion of St. Paul has been ranked by an acute thinker as one of the three greatest events in the long history of the world. It is a turning-point in the history of mankind. It has profoundly influenced the thought and action of men ever since, and its power will not cease with time, but operate through all eternity. It was a true instinct, then, that led the Church to celebrate the beginning of St. Paul's spiritual life and work, rather than his martyrdom.

THE PRESENTATION OF CHRIST IN THE TEMPLE

COMMONLY CALLED

THE PURIFICATION OF ST. MARY THE VIRGIN

FEBRUARY 2

The Collect

ALMIGHTY and everliving God, we humbly beseech thy Majesty, that, as thy only-begotten Son was this day presented in the temple in substance of our flesh, so we may be presented unto thee with pure and clean hearts, by the same thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Jesus, by Thy presentation,
Thou, who didst for us endure,
Make us see Thy great salvation,
Seal us with Thy promise sure.

H. J. PYE.

THE fortieth day after Christmas commemorates the Presentation of the infant Child Jesus in the Temple of His Father. The historic account fills a large place in the Gospel story of the infancy of Christ. It is true that the narrative of the presentation itself is given in few words. But the appearance of Simeon, as he came to the Temple, led of the Spirit, devoutly waiting for the consolation of Israel, fills an important place in Scripture. For it had been revealed unto him, ' by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ.' Simeon was both poet and prophet. His inspired song has been sung wherever the Gospel has been preached. His Nunc Dimittis was the swan song of the Old Testament Church, but the

Church of Christ has made it a hymn of undying praise. He foresaw that the holy Child was 'set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel', and that the Virgin Mother would be called to receive the sad sword of sorrow, in a heart broken at the sight of the suffering Son.

Simeon seems to stand in God's holy house as the representative of our humanity, watching for the Advent of the world's great Saviour. But there was one portion of the human race which especially needed a strong and loving Redeemer: woman vainly beating wings of hope against the bars of her prison-house. And as the Song of Simeon like sweet incense filled the Temple with praise, there drew near the first of holy women to adore the Christ, to minister to Him of their substance, to stand last at the cross, and to be first at the tomb.

How appropriate and fitting it all was! Anna, 'the gracious,' as her name signifies, a prophetess, an inspired forth-teller of God's truth, the daughter of Phanuel, which is but a form of Peniel, with its beautiful meaning of 'the face of God', joining the aged Simeon in proclaiming 'joy to the world', the Lord has come. She had those beautiful characteristics which have so often marked out woman for high service in the cause of God. It is said of Anna that she departed not from the Temple: how constant she was, and how faithful, and how persevering! And it is said again, that she served God with fastings and prayers night and day—what splendid self-denial, what profound devotion, what untiring watchfulness! She was of great age: eighty-four years had left their traces upon her widowed heart, and in a far truer sense than that of the Scottish seer, she could say:

'Tis the sunset of life gives me mystical lore,
And coming events cast their shadows before.

God had given her the spirit of prophecy, and had filled her mind's eye with the promised Saviour, and now He gave her utterance as well, when she saw the fulfilment of all her hopes, and could speak with certainty 'of Him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem'.

The Presentation of Christ in the Temple is full of the deepest spiritual teaching.

It was the fulfilment of the Divine requirement since the dark night of the Passover in Egypt, that the first-born should be dedicated to the service of God.

The dim type and dark shadow passed, as the First-born, not of Mary only, but of the whole creation, was offered to God, and as prophecy found its perfect fulfilment: 'Lo, I come to do Thy will.'

It was eminently fit, as Bishop Hall remarks, that 'the Holy Mother should present God with His own'. How simple and yet how profound is our confession of the truth in the Nicene Creed, 'Incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary'!

And as Christ was the First-born of a restored humanity, the second Adam, the true head of our race: the members of Christ, all who are 'in Him', were thus presented to the Father, for a life of obedient service.

The Purification of the Virgin Mother, although it has only a secondary place in the Festival, is not without its significance.

It has been asked, Why was it necessary on her part, when the holy Child was conceived by the operation of the Holy Ghost? And a still further question arises, if the translation of the Revisers be accepted, why 'their purification'?

The answer is the same as that given for the Circumcision of Christ. As Bishop Harvey Goodwin remarks,

'as Jesus was circumcised, so Mary was purified; in each case there was submission to the letter of a divine law, and there was no desire and no attempt to establish an exception.'

The spiritual lesson to us takes us back to our Baptism. In its spiritual significance, as good old Bishop Hall pointed out, 'it is our circumcision, and our sacrifice of purification . . . our presentation unto God.' It recalls our rich privileges, marks out for us our responsibilities, and it sends us to our plain duties, in a life of loving and loyal obedience, 'to serve and love Him best of all.'

ST. MATTHIAS'S DAY

February 24

The Collect

O Almighty God, who into the place of the traitor Judas didst choose thy faithful servant Matthias to be of the number of the twelve Apostles; Grant that thy Church, being alway preserved from false Apostles, may be ordered and guided by faithful and true pastors; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Lord, Thine abiding presence directs the wondrous choice,
For one in place of Judas the faithful now rejoice.

Earl Nelson.

Great Works, the Secret and Sublime, forsooth,
Let others prize! . . . What are these at best,—beside
God helping, God directing everywhere?

Browning.

ST. MATTHIAS appears at first sight to have no other claim to attention or thought, save that he was chosen to take the place of the traitor Judas in the

apostolic band. His name is only mentioned in the New Testament in connexion with his appointment to the apostolate.

But the fact that the name of any apostle receives a small space in the divine record is no proof that his labours were not abundant, and his influence widespread. For in the Scriptures, while the faults and failings of men are chronicled, as a constant warning to us, Christ alone is magnified, and He stands out above all others, as the only pure and perfect flower of our humanity. And the labours of every true follower of the Lord must ever be for the glory of God, and the extension of the kingdom of His dear Son.

The name of the apostle seems fitting in view of his selection to fill the place of the apostate and traitor. It means a 'gift of Jehovah'. St. Peter had suggested that one should be chosen to fill up the number of the Twelve, from those who had 'companied' with the Lord Jesus, and could thus bear witness to His resurrection. The disciples nominated two who had the necessary qualifications, Joseph Barsabas and Matthias, and then committed the whole matter to God, the great Disposer of events in prayer, leaving to the All-Wise the entire determination as to 'which of them He had chosen'. And the lot fell upon Matthias.

It is interesting to note that the lot was not afterwards used in the New Testament Church. There was no need of it, for the Holy Spirit was given to be an unceasing Guide. But under the old Covenant, lots were used to distinguish the scape-goat, in the assignment of priestly duties, and in the distribution of the promised land. The lot was regarded as a divine method of direction and therefore conclusive.

The spiritual lessons connected with the appointment of Matthias are important to Christians in every age of the Church's history.

Matthias knew Christ personally.

This is a supreme requisite in the Christian ministry. He had seen the Lord Jesus, he had believed in Him as the Christ of God, he had followed Him in Christian service. And every Christian must have the same spiritual experience. Not in the same way it is true, for Matthias saw Jesus Christ in the flesh; but not the less really are we to know Christ by faith. Our Church teaches her children in the Epiphany Collect to say, 'we, which know Thee now by faith.'

Matthias was a witness of the Resurrection of Christ.

And this, too, is to be the experience of the Christian. St. Paul, as Bishop Lightfoot points out, makes the essence of knowing Christ to consist in knowing the power of His resurrection. It is to be a felt experience, an appropriation of the fact and of the truth springing from it, the pledge of Christ's triumph over sin, the proof of our justification through faith in Him, the assurance of immortality in the life of God.

Matthias yielded instant obedience to the Divine call.

There was no hesitation on his part when, in the midst of dangers, for the infant Church of Christ was then in the extremity of peril, he obeyed the call of duty. He knew the dangers and difficulties besetting the Church of Christ, and he must have been conscious of the persecutions which awaited it on every hand: but he never faltered and never wavered, but made that fateful choice which numbered him for ever with those that follow the Lamb.

Matthias showed the highest spirit of Christian courage.

He was already in the ranks of the soldiers of Christ, and that, too, in the fighting line. He had 'companied' with Christ and His disciples from His Baptism to His Ascension. He stood ready for the call to arms. And now it came in the defection of one trusted much, Judas the traitor. Matthias was called to fill the gap in the ranks, to carry the banner to battle again which had fallen from traitorous hands. Napoleon said that the rarest kind of courage was two o'clock in the morning courage, but what kind is nobler than that of one who fills a traitor's place, in a cause which seems hopeless, if not lost! But his confidence in his Divine Leader was not misplaced, for Jesus Christ overcame death, and turned the cross of shame into a throne of triumph. And it was given to Matthias to follow Him, who is the King of kings and Lord of lords.

Matthias was a faithful disciple.

There is little said concerning Matthias in Scripture. But he has this striking testimony borne to him, he was a member of that faithful band that had 'companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John to the day that He was taken up from us'. Many had failed their Master during that long testing period, and had walked no more with Him. In the great crisis of the cross they had been tested and found wanting. But Matthias had shown good fidelity. The Spirit of the Christ had entered in some measure into his heart, and the first love had continued and burned up in a constant flame. Faithful in that which was least, he was called to the higher office and larger work, the greatest for good that our world has known, that of an apostle of Christ.

THE ANNUNCIATION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

March 25

The Collect

We beseech thee, O Lord, pour thy grace into our hearts; that, as we have known the incarnation of thy Son Jesus Christ by the message of an angel, so by his cross and passion we may be brought unto the glory of his resurrection; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

The Prophet gave the sign
For faithful men to read;
A Virgin, born of David's line,
Shall bear the promised Seed.

Anon.

Chosen of heaven! that hour: but thou, oh thou,
E'en as a flower with gracious rains o'erfraught,
Thy virgin head beneath its crown didst bow,
And take to thy meek breast th' all-holy word,
And own thyself the handmaid of the Lord.

Felicia Hemans.

THE visit of the angel Gabriel to Mary of Nazareth was fraught with tremendous consequences. Never was more hopeful message brought to earth by heavenly visitant than that by Gabriel, the special messenger of the good news of God. As Archdeacon Moule so sympathetically writes:

How beautiful within the shade
Of Mary's humble dwelling-place,
With his high message clear displayed
And Hail to the most blessèd maid!
The smile of Gabriel's face.

There was profound significance even in his name. 'I am Gabriel,' that is, 'Hero of God,' one of the sacred seven, as Milton thought—

Who in God's presence, nearest to His throne,
Stand ready at command, and are His eyes
That run through all the heavens, and down to the earth
Bear His swift commands.

There is an old saying amongst the Jews, that Gabriel, the messenger of good, has two wings, whereas Michael, the warrior of God, who fights with the enemies of the Lord, has but one; for God sends a swift messenger of joy and peace, but is slow to anger, and unwilling to execute wrath.

It was the angel of peace who came to Mary, and yet in his name there was the thought of victory: God's hero, God's Mighty One. He announced to the Virgin the high and holy purposes of God towards her, as His chosen instrument, in His mighty plan of redemption. 'Hail, thou that art highly favoured,' thou graciously accepted one! The thought of the original is not *plena gratia*, as the famous hymn in honour of the Virgin has led many to believe, but *gratia cumulata*, with its meaning, having been much graced,—as Bengel so graphically puts it, 'Not a mother of grace but a daughter.' Stier carries the thought still further, 'Mary is not the dispenser of favour, but the recipient of it, with and for the rest of us, the type and germ of the Church.'

The mistaken honours paid to the Virgin, which, had she the power, she would be the first to disclaim, should not prevent Christians from studying the stupendous miracle with which she was so intimately connected, the birth of the Sinless One; nor yet shut out from us the noble lessons of her holy life.

The great truth of the Incarnation is enshrined here. The Son of God was born of a woman, and took our nature into His. He bound up the life of man with the life of God in one indivisible being. This He did not for time alone, but for all eternity.

The Annunciation brings out in full relief the character of the Virgin.

There is Faith. Sarah laughed in the face of the great promise, and her action looked like doubt ; Mary, though she might marvel as to how it could be, still rested in the word of God.

There is Obedience. 'Behold the handmaid of the Lord ; be it unto me according to thy word.'

There is Submission. The call that comes to her is along the path of the highest duty that ever human being has been asked to perform. She is to be the vehicle for the accomplishment of God's mighty plan of the world's salvation. There is the most humble and implicit submission to the will of God.

There is Humility. Was ever such shown before, the complete and perfect innocence of the most beautiful modesty ? She looked forward to the Saviour, and confessed her own individual need, as well as her appropriation of His salvation : 'My Saviour !'

> I, even I, do magnify the Lord,
> And I rejoice in Him, my Saviour, God.

Thus, with her own lips, she put away for ever the question of worship. She stands by her own confession in the ranks of sinners, and looks to Christ alone as her hope. The very humanity of the Virgin Mary puts aside all thought of worship due to her. Her chief charm, the whole beauty of her character, lies in the fact that she was the flower of womanhood. There is nothing in

Scripture nor in the early Fathers to suggest anything else. She was utterly unlike the fabled Lillis or Lillith of the Talmud, of whom the legend ran that she was the first wife of Adam, before the creation of Eve, who for disobedience was shut out of Paradise. Her home, according to the myth, is in the air, and she is said to be the mother of demons. Dante Gabriel Rossetti has in two lines characterized this Lillis of the fair hair :

> Not a drop of her blood was human,
> But she was made like a soft sweet woman.

Never for an instant, as we see Mary in the Scripture narrative, was she aught else but human, and her life was bound up with the suffering and the sadness, and the joy too of our humanity.

There is Consecration. It is a living sacrifice which she offers to God : ' not my will, but Thine.' It is the utter abandonment of self : ' according to Thy word.'

ST. MARK'S DAY

April 25

The Collect

O Almighty God, who hast instructed thy holy Church with the heavenly doctrine of thy Evangelist Saint Mark ; Give us grace, that, being not like children carried away with every blast of vain doctrine, we may be established in the truth of thy holy Gospel ; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

> The lion-faced, he told abroad
> The strength of love, the strength of faith ;
> He showed the Almighty Son of God,
> The Man Divine who won by death.
>
> C. F. Alexander.

JOHN whose surname was Mark, while a Hebrew by nation, a Levite by profession, bore a Roman surname, Marcus, 'a hammer.' It is by his surname that he is best known, the strong hammer of God, crushing the hard and flinty rock of man's natural heart, through the power of the Divine Word.

St. Mark was St. Peter's spiritual child, and that apostle fondly calls him in the faith, 'Marcus my son.' He was closely associated with Barnabas, whose 'sister's son' he was. He was a man of the city, his mother Mary having her home in comparative comfort at Jerusalem itself. It was probably the fact that her house was the social meeting-place of the early Christians that brought him under St. Peter's teaching to Christ. Peter evidently made Mary's home a place of sojourn: probably she had a prophet's chamber, for it was to her house that his footsteps turned on the day of his miraculous deliverance from prison, in answer to prayer. His voice was evidently familiar to the maid Rhoda, who came to answer his knocking, for she recognized it at once.

The Gospel of St. Mark has been accepted through all the Christian ages as the Gospel of St. Peter, in almost as true a sense as if it bore his name. Tertullian, for instance, speaks of Mark as the interpreter of Peter, and Origen distinctly says, 'Mark composed it as Peter guided him.' His Gospel is peculiarly descriptive, and largely practical. He appears to be more interested in the acts of our blessed Lord, and in the events with which He was connected, than in His teaching and sermons. It is the life of Christ that he portrays. And the life is that of Jesus, the Son of God. It is a life of almost continuous labour, a life of teaching, a life of preaching, a life of healing.

St. Mark's symbol is the lion. It is emblematic of the lion-like utterance of his Gospel, and his pictorial representations of the Lion of the tribe of Judah.

And yet the boldness of his nature was tinged with a sweet gentleness, which at first seemed to suggest weakness. St. Paul did not hesitate to blame him, when he allowed personal feeling, or home-sickness, to stand in the way of the all-important work of the propagation of the gospel. But if for the moment he seemed to fail, he soon with God's grace returned to the work of an evangelist and minister. And God overruled the seeming evil, by using Mark in company with Barnabas for the spread of the gospel in other regions. Later still, he was with Peter at either the real or spiritual Babylon. And at the close of St. Paul's career, Mark is with him at Rome, where his ministry is greatly prized by the apostle, and his presence was to him a source of great comfort.

There is a deep spiritual lesson in the return of Mark to the right path. Demas, who like Mark had been a fellow-labourer with St. Paul, fell away, and there is nothing to show that he ever returned to his first love. But Mark became 'profitable for the ministry', and probably his knowledge of Latin made him a power in Rome.

The last scenes of his life have a certain amount of historical uncertainty about them, but, according to tradition, he founded the first Christian Church in Alexandria, which afterwards became famous for its learning. He is said to have been the first Bishop of Alexandria, and tradition tells us that he died a blessed martyr for the truth he loved and preached, under the cruel monster Nero.

ST. PHILIP AND ST. JAMES'S DAY

MAY 1

The Collect

O ALMIGHTY God, whom truly to know is everlasting life; Grant us perfectly to know thy Son Jesus Christ to be the way, the truth, and the life; that, following the steps of thy holy Apostles, Saint Philip and Saint James, we may stedfastly walk in the way that leadeth to eternal life; through the same thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

One who warns the sinner
Timely mercy seek;
One who brings to Jesus
Souls sincere and meek.—J. S. JONES.

O Way that leads to God,
O Word abiding ay,
O endless Light on high,
Mercy's fresh-springing flood,
Worker of all things good,
O glorious Life of all
That on their Maker call,
Christ Jesus, hear.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA,
tr. DEAN PLUMPTRE.

THE Church of England combines the commemoration of St. Philip with that of St. James the Less. The chief thought of the day is centred in Christ as 'the way, the truth, and the life', and the importance of that knowledge which carries with it an eternity of life. 'This is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent.'

St. Philip had listened to the words of Christ, when he taught His disciples that He was the living Way from man to God, from sin to forgiveness, from earth to heaven; that He was the Truth, absolute truth concerning both man and God; and that He was the Life, its Author, Possessor, and Prince; and wonderingly he sought for a theophany of glory, a vision of the Eternal, which would scatter doubt and compel belief.

We may well be thankful that Philip asked the question which led our Lord, as Professor Hort pointed out, to use words which 'belong more to dialogue than to discourse'. For what a flood of light they throw upon the Person of the Christ. 'Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known Me, Philip?' The point, as Westcott with his usual penetration remarks, is not in regard to the power of observation in the disciples, but touches primarily the self-revelation of Christ. For Christ was the revelation of the love, and will, and purpose of the Father; an unveiling of the Father had been going on through the life and ministry of Jesus before their eyes. The appearance of God in dazzling vision, or startling glory, in form brighter than light, or name written in the heavens, might have produced, as in Moses and Isaiah, fear and trembling, but only a Personal Life could awaken trust, produce love, lead to obedience, inspire devotion and self-sacrifice, and maintain the life of God in the soul of man.

'Hast thou not known Me, Philip?' And then Jesus used words which only a Divine Son could possibly use of a Divine Father: 'He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father.' This is certainly something far above any mere moral or spiritual union. As Godet justly remarks, even the most perfect Christian could not say, 'He that

hath seen me hath seen Christ ; ' how much less then could a Jew, though perfect, have said, ' He that hath seen me hath seen the Father ' ? What is it but Christ's claim to Deity, as the Son of the Father ?

St. Philip, who thus drew from Christ the deepest teaching concerning His divine nature, was one of the most practical of the apostles. Whenever he appears on the great stage of action, during our Lord's Ministry, he appears as a man of affairs. He was the only apostle, with the possible exception of Andrew, bearing a name unmistakably Greek in its origin. We are left to conjecture as to why it was given to him, for it has a strange meaning for a Jew, not to say an apostle : ' lover of horses.'

We see the activity of Philip in the preparation for our Lord's great miracle of the feeding of the multitude, perhaps because of his ability in matters of business, or possibly on account of the proximity of his native town Bethsaida. Then he was thought to be the fitting person to introduce the inquiring Greeks to the Lord Jesus. But in his humility he took them to Andrew.

In character Philip was practical and yet retiring, earnest and sincere, perhaps a little slow at first to see the truth, but an inquiring disciple, standing ready to receive the truth, and to live it out in action in his life.

St. James, who bore the surname of ' the Less ', gained it from his diminutive stature. There is probably no apostle about whom so little is known. There are no less than six persons of the name of James, closely connected with our Lord, in the Gospel narrative, but many scholars think that while six different names are used, there are certainly only three individuals bearing them.

James the Less is thought in all probability to be

James the son of Alphaeus (Mark iii. 18), and son of Mary (xv. 40).

He has been identified with James, 'the Lord's brother,' surnamed the Just, the first Bishop of Jerusalem, by different writers, notably by the scholarly Lange. But this identification has been greatly questioned, on many critical grounds. The Church of England, however, seems to have given it a certain sanction by using part of the Epistle of St. James for this day. In the Greek Church a distinction is made, for October 9 is dedicated to James the Less, and October 23 to 'the Lord's brother'.

James the Less stands ninth in the list of the apostles as given by the Evangelists. We know very little more than the names of his parents, and that he was a cousin of the Lord. Nay! we know that he followed Christ, and served Him as an apostle, and that his name is on one of the foundation stones of the New Jerusalem.

ST. BARNABAS THE APOSTLE

JUNE 11

The Collect

O LORD God Almighty, who didst endue thy holy Apostle Barnabas with singular gifts of the Holy Ghost; Leave us not, we beseech thee, destitute of thy manifold gifts, nor yet of grace to use them alway to thy honour and glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

The son of consolation, moved by Thy law of love,
Forsaking earthly treasures, sought riches from above.
HORATIO, EARL NELSON.

Like dew upon a wither'd flower
Is comfort to the heart that 's broken.
HARTLEY COLERIDGE.

Alas! we have so little grace,
With love so little burn,
That the hardest of our works for God
Is to comfort those that mourn.—FABER.

JOSES, or Joseph, whose surname was Barnabas, 'son of prophecy, of exhortation, or of consolation,' is one of the most beautiful characters in Holy Writ. The inspired writers are most careful not to pronounce mere panegyrics upon human instruments, however blessed or used of God. 'We have this treasure,' as St. Paul writes, 'in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.' But of Barnabas it is said, that 'he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith'.

The personal appearance of the apostles of the Lord is largely a matter of conjecture. The Christian imagination has loved, however, to picture them as representative of different types of Christian life. John represents the spiritual and contemplative type, Peter the bold and courageous, Paul the intellectual, Matthew the practical.

There is in the action of the people of Lystra towards Paul and Barnabas, as Chrysostom infers, a hint in regard to the personal aspect and bearing of Barnabas. They said, 'The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men.' And they called Barnabas Jupiter, the supreme deity of Roman and Greek mythology, the god of the sky, the father of the gods. It would thus appear that Barnabas was of commanding mien, of dignified appearance, and of splendid presence.

Barnabas is described as a good man.

This eulogy from the Evangelist's pen is no mere empty compliment. The Lord Jesus refused to receive the title 'good' when it was offered to Him in conventional politeness.

Barnabas was a 'good man', what we should now call a good Christian man. He was a truly converted man, a spiritually minded man, a godly man. He was a native of Cyprus, a land where the people were renowned in all ages for licentious living, the chief goddess being Ashtoreth, whose worship was associated with sexual impurity. Out of this land, dark with idolatry, from an environment destructive of every virtue, Barnabas came forth, and following Christ, the Light of life, he became a light-bearer of the gospel of truth.

The secret of his life is not withheld from us—he was 'full of the Holy Ghost'. He was a man filled with divine power, and blessed with rich spiritual gifts. But, it may be asked, how did such great privilege become his? We are told still further, that he was a man full of faith. Now all is made clear. The Holy Spirit came through faith in Christ, and goodness is a fruit of the Spirit. This is the divine method, without which there is no real goodness, for goodness is nothing less than the life of God in the soul of man. 'And of His fullness have we all received, and grace for grace.'

Barnabas means 'son of consolation'.

This is indeed a splendid name, with a wealth of beauty in its meaning. It was a great name to live up to, as Alexander the Great hinted to the soldier who bore his own name, i.e. 'Helper of men'; either change it, or live up to it. But Barnabas was a true consoler, a helper of the weak, a succourer of the needy, a com-

forter of the troubled, with an eye seeking to discover the wretched and miserable:

> He hath a tear for pity, and a hand
> Open as day for melting charity.

Such men carry a benediction with them wherever they go. Their opposites are not far to seek. There are people who bring into human society a sense of irritation, like winds that fill the eyes with dust. There are men who chill the hearts of those they meet, thus enfeebling resolve and preventing initiative, just as the ice from the north, as it passes along the shore, keeps back the springing vegetation. In the late Boer War it is said that a man was brought to trial by court martial, not because he was a rebel, nor for infraction of discipline, nor for aiding and abetting the Boers, but simply because he was a discourager. There was no use in action; to his mind, Britain's cause was utterly hopeless; the only course open, absolute surrender; and when his word was not 'Surrender!' it was 'Retreat!' Every reverse was food to his doubt, and increased his powers of questioning, and led him to offer fresh reasons for discouragement.

But Barnabas was like the sunlight, and carried with him good cheer. The feeble were given heart, the downcast looked up, the hopeless took fresh courage. His very presence was an inspiration.

Barnabas was a man of the largest-hearted charity. He sold his landed possessions, and brought the money, and laid it at the apostles' feet. He had given his heart to Christ, and he would not withhold his money. He consecrates it to the service of God:

> Take my silver and my gold,
> Not a mite would I withhold.

The kindly spirit of the man was everywhere in evidence. He it was who took St. Paul after his conversion, when the disciples were still afraid of him, and brought the once persecutor, but now humble Christian, to the apostles. When at Antioch the gospel was preached to the Grecians or Greek-speaking Jews, and Barnabas was sent thither by the Church at Jerusalem, he displayed no sectional, no narrow spirit, but was glad to see souls brought into the light, and exhorted them (as his surname implies) with purpose of heart to cleave unto the Lord. The record of his life shows a gentle, kindly, unselfish character, marked by considerateness and warmth of heart, combined with tenderness and munificence.

ST. JOHN BAPTIST'S DAY

JUNE 24

The Collect

ALMIGHTY God, by whose providence thy servant John Baptist was wonderfully born, and sent to prepare the way of thy Son our Saviour, by preaching of repentance; Make us so to follow his doctrine and holy life, that we may truly repent according to his preaching; and after his example constantly speak the truth, boldly rebuke vice, and patiently suffer for the truth's sake; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

The great Proclaimer, with a voice
More awful than the sound of a trumpet, cried:
Repentance, and Heaven's kingdom nigh at hand!

MILTON.

John, than which man a sadder or a greater
Not till this day has been of woman born;
John, like some iron peak by the Creator
Fired with the red glow of the rushing morn.

Thus, when the sun shall rise and overcome it,
Stands in his shining desolate and bare,
Yet not the less the inexorable summit
Flamed him his signal to the upper air.

F. W. H. MYERS.

JOHN the Baptist, the greatest of Saints under the Old Covenant, received from the lips of Jesus Christ the highest encomium He who was the Truth ever gave to mortal man. Among the sons of men, said the Lord Jesus, no prophet greater than John the Baptist has arisen. It was no mere compliment, we may be sure, but had a divine purpose, probably to magnify the Law of the Old Covenant, and by contrast to show the value of the New Covenant of Grace, for 'he that is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he'. It is the old legal maxim applied to a spiritual principle, 'the least of the greatest is greater than the greatest of the least.'

The genius of the man, the nobility of his character, the influence of his life and work, were profoundly affected by his nearness to the Christ. For he was the chosen Herald of the Gospel, who came in the spirit and power of Elijah, the Forerunner of the Messiah of Israel, yea more, of the Saviour of the world.

He was a God-sent man, as the Evangelist declares. His very name reveals God's high purpose concerning this child of prophecy: Jehohanan, as it really is, Jehovah's gift. He is in himself a sign of God's goodness, a

gift of His grace, a harbinger of God's inestimable gift of His dear Son.

He was a God-inhabited man. From the moment of his birth the promise of God was that he should be filled with the Holy Ghost. We may wonder why such a great promise should be given before Pentecost, but we cannot doubt the fact. And in the fact we have the explanation of the life, Spirit-filled, Spirit-led, and Spirit-endued, as it certainly was at every stage.

The man and his message, word and deed, character and life, how closely they are related in John the Baptist. There is such a thing as the message of a life, as well as the message of the lips; there is, beyond question, teaching by character and example, as well as teaching by word of mouth.

(1) The Character of the Man.

The first mark of his greatness is faithfulness.

This is a fruit of the Spirit, as St. Paul points out in his Epistle to the Galatians. He was faithful to Christ. He never wavered in his allegiance, and if he seemed to do so for a brief moment in the darkness and desertion of the prison cell, it was but the trembling of the needle as it seeks the pole. Indeed, we may apply to him the words of the old English song:

> True as the needle to the pole,
> Or as the dial to the sun.

'This above all: to thine own self be true,' said our great dramatist; but John Baptist rose higher, for being true to the highest, even Christ, he could not 'then be false to any man', nor to anything. He therefore followed truth wherever it should lead, as we know even to death. He made duty his polar star, and constantly followed its light and leading. Conscience, that 'little

spark of celestial fire', was ever to him a veritable 'candle of the Lord'.

The second leading characteristic of the man was his supreme courage.

Racine, when he places on the lips of Joad in his *Athalie* the sublime words, 'I fear God, dear Abner, and I have no other fear,' is but re-echoing the spirit of the Baptist, whose great soul feared God, and knew no other fear. He could never be a time-server, and bow to every changing wind of popular favour or disgrace. He was no reed shaken by the wind, but a forest oak, that might bend, but would never break. And thus he lived, a bold rebuker of vice, a constant witness for the truth, a patient sufferer for the truth's sake.

The third great element in his character was his deep humility.

The man might have been carried away by the burst of popular acclaim that welcomed his preaching, or moved to pride by the sight of the vast multitudes that hung upon his words and followed his ministry. But never for an instant was this the case. He performed that most difficult task of all, he put his own personality entirely aside: he was nothing in himself,—a voice, that is all. And so his estimate of himself was true, as he looked towards Christ, 'I must decrease, but He must increase.'

(2) The Message of the Preacher.

It was a call to repentance.

The terrible fact of sin, its power, its curse, its hold upon man's heart and life was ever present to his mind. And as the Preparer for the way of the Lord, his first call was to repentance. Repentance is far more than sorrow for sin, although sorrow is a part of every true

repentance. Perhaps no better definition has ever been given than that of our Church Catechism, 'Repentance whereby they forsake sin.' It is a turning of the mind upon one's need, a turning of the heart from self and sin, a turning of the life to God to whom it belongs.

John the Baptist pointed to Christ.

This was the burden of his message, 'Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.' It was the special need of his age, and it is the need of every age. For Christ is Himself the gospel. The light of life is Christ, the hope of man is Christ, the home of the heart is Christ; in a word, Christ is All. It was to Christ that John Baptist pointed, and the Church of God has laid hold of the supreme principle: Christ for us our atonement, Christ in us the hope of glory.

John exalted the Holy Spirit's baptism, as the cleansing and renewing power of God, fire to cleanse, fire to enlighten, fire to guide. The Baptism of John was mainly symbolical, showing the need of purification from sin; and initiatory, standing at the door of the kingdom so near at hand. The Baptism of Christ in the Spirit, as John witnessed, would be mighty in operation, not only in the outward element, but in the spiritual as well, which, like fire, would illumine the mind, purify the heart, and inflame the will with burning zeal.

The Baptist raised a warning voice to the careless and impenitent. He pointed out their peril, and warned them of their danger. The chaff would be destroyed by fire. What a figure it is of a useless life, and what a fate awaits it!

And what a contrast there is to the safety of the believer, which he at the same moment proclaimed! He will 'gather His wheat into the garner'. On the

one hand, a message of comfort to those who are safe in Christ; on the other, a faithful warning of a terrible fate awaiting those who turn a deaf ear to the great message of God's prophet, his urgent call to repentance.

ST. PETER'S DAY

JUNE 29

The Collect

O ALMIGHTY God, who by thy Son Jesus Christ didst give to thy Apostle Saint Peter many excellent gifts, and commandedst him earnestly to feed thy flock; Make, we beseech thee, all Bishops and Pastors diligently to preach thy holy Word, and the people obediently to follow the same, that they may receive the crown of everlasting glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Thrice fallen, thrice restored!
The bitter lesson learnt,
That heart for thee, O Lord,
With triple ardour burnt.
The cross he took he laid not down
Until he grasp'd the Martyr's crown.

BP. WM. WALSHAM HOW.

Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.—St. Matt. xvi. 16.

ST. PETER was the natural leader of the apostolic band. He was fitted for the position by natural temperament and endowment, and from his early training in life. It all formed a foundation upon which, in the school of Christ, the Lord Jesus could build.

The sphere of life in which he had already been trained was a splendid one. Where could many traits of noble character be better formed than in his fisherman's boat, on rough as well as smiling sea, developing boldness, courage, energy, endurance, promptness, sacrifice, vigilance—one might almost say, the active qualities in every form?

Such was the man whom Andrew, first of disciples called, led to Jesus. His name was Simon—truly symbolic, for it means 'hearer'—which was to be changed to Kephas, 'stone, or rock-man,' which we use under its Greek form of Peter.

Peter, as we know him now, was a man with many noble qualities of head and heart, and with many natural weaknesses and imperfections, which needed the grace of God to alter and destroy. The very qualities which under grace made him great, in a selfish worldly life would have proved all the more dangerous.

For he was a man of flesh and blood, with a great heart beating in his breast. In temperament he was ardent and enthusiastic, easily carried away by feeling. In nature he was wilful and wayward, a man of impulse. In mind he was quick in apprehension, and ready to leap to a conclusion. In action he was intense, and energetic, and vigorous, burning his bridges as he went upon his way.

It was splendid material from which to mould, and shape, and make a man. But there was always the danger that he might be marred in the making. And it is for ever true, that the degeneration or the perversion of the best is the worst. They say 'best men are moulded out of faults'. And we know that angels rejoice when men turn from the worse for the

better. But virtues turned into vices must surely make them weep:

> For I say this is death and the sole death,—
> When a man's loss comes to him from his gain;
> Darkness from light, from knowledge ignorance,
> And lack of love from love made manifest.

The man Simon, the hearer, became Peter, the stone or rock-like one, under the influence of Jesus Christ.

Peter was a courageous man. But at first it was merely physical courage. He could brave the storm and the deep, and in the face of an armed force strike off the ear of Malchus. But in moral courage he was strangely lacking. This was shown more than once, but with lamentable results in the threefold denial of his Lord. The resurrection of the Lord Jesus, preceded as it was by the loving, if reproachful, look of his Master —'The Lord turned and looked upon Peter,'—filled him with a courage which nothing could daunt. This marvellous change can only be explained by two supreme facts, the life of the Risen Christ, and the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Peter was a man of strong affections. He had not that worst of weaknesses, a cold and dry heart. But like Browning's pomegranate, 'cut deep down the middle,' it would show 'A heart within blood-tinctured, of a veined humanity'. And Christ, the King of Love, drew out the affection of that warm and trustful heart. Who can watch the dealing of the loving Jesus with Peter without being moved by it? The first special message He sent after His resurrection had the personal thought of His loving yet weak disciple in it, 'Go, tell My disciples, and *Peter*.' Peter was the first of the apostolic band to whom Christ appeared.

Peter was a man of deep humility. He was clothed

with it, though his giant-heart of courage seemed at times to cast it off. But study more closely his life and you will find that none of the apostles approached him in his sense of personal need and sinfulness. For instance, in the hour of the miraculous draught of the fishes, Andrew, earnest man that he was, stood apparently unmoved; John, the apostle of love, said nothing seemingly; but Peter was moved to a sense of heart-crushing penitence, and cried in an agony of sorrow, 'Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord.' This spirit of repentance, so akin to that of David, marked him out amidst all failures, and faults, and falls, as a spiritual man, one who, sounding the depths of human need, saw nothing but despair, until in faith he looked away to Christ, who alone could help and save.

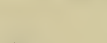
Peter was a man of rare faith. It was robust and rock-like, as became the man. He was the first of the disciples to confess his Lord as the Messiah. While men who had watched the ministry of Christ, and had seen His miracles of love and power, were content to think that He was the Baptist, or Elias, or one of the prophets, the faith of Peter leaped to the truth of His Sonship, 'Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.'

It is easy to see the faults of Peter. It is unnecessary, however, as a modern writer has done, to stigmatize him as 'a cowardly liar'.

His faults are written large upon Holy Writ for our learning. Possibly, they are our own. Or if they are not seen in our lives, the want of them may arise from a coldness in our nature, which would never produce them. But if we are weak, and impulsive, and inconsistent—rash and wanting in moral courage, we may learn many lessons from St. Peter.

For if he denied Christ, and forsook Christ, he repented deeply and bitterly; he loved his Master still, and longed for forgiveness, and remained near until he was restored again.

And though he failed, as so many do, just where he was strongest—in courage, in faith, and in love; still he ever turned to Christ, the Source of all strength, and sought and found in His grace help for every time of need, that 'we having died unto sin', in the old life, 'might live unto righteousness,' in the new.



ST. JAMES THE APOSTLE

JULY 25

The Collect

GRANT, O merciful God, that as thine holy Apostle Saint James, leaving his father and all that he had, without delay was obedient unto the calling of thy Son Jesus Christ, and followed him: so we, forsaking all worldly and carnal affections, may be evermore ready to follow thy holy commandments; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Saint James was in the path of toil
When, 'Follow Me,' Emmanuel said;
And lo, at once, the rude turmoil
He left, to haste where Jesus led.—MONTGOMERY.

I charge thee . . . Fling away Ambition!
By that sin fell the Angels:—how can man, then,
The image of his Maker, hope to win by it?
SHAKESPEARE.

Christ heard; and will'd that James should fall,
First prey of Satan's rage;
John linger out his fellows all,
And die in bloodless age.—J. H. NEWMAN.

What is enthusiasm? What can it be
But thought enkindled to a high degree?

ST. JAMES the Apostle of the Lord, whose day we keep, is, it is quite evident from the Epistle and Gospel for the day, St. James the brother of St. John, and the son of Zebedee.

The English name, James, is the familiar Jacob, the great father of the twelve patriarchs, who from being a miserable supplanter, became the mighty Israel, a prince with God. The Hebrew name has passed into almost every language.

St. James was one of the earliest followers of Christ. This was in every sense fitting, for that is the literal significance of his name, 'following after.' The statement of St. John that Andrew 'first findeth his own brother Simon', would almost seem to imply that John secondly sought his own brother James and brought him to Jesus. In any case, the Lord Jesus soon gave him a definite and distinct call to follow Him. For when the Lord saw Zebedee with his two sons, James and John, in the boat mending their nets, He called the two sons to discipleship, and they 'immediately left the ship and their father, and followed Him'. St. Mark's graphic touch, that the 'hired servants' were left with the father, shows two things: first, that they were not heartless in leaving their father alone, and in the second place, that they were people of some little means. There was a second, if not a third call, after the miraculous draught

of fishes, when, with Peter and John, James forsook 'all' and followed Jesus in permanent discipleship.

How few comparatively of our young men hear the call to the Christian ministry! Why is this? Is it that the call is not frequently enough voiced in the pulpit or given in the religious press? 'In my lifetime,' the Bishop of Caledonia (Dr. Du Vernet) says, 'I only remember having heard one such appeal from the pulpit. It was when I was a lad, yet I remember even the words and the earnest pleading tone: "If there is a young man here present who has had a passing thought of entering the ministry, let him think it again, for it may be the Lord is calling him."'

The character of St. James is portrayed for us in the pages of the New Testament. The record is brief, it is true, but a word sometimes sums up a man, and makes him live and breathe before the mind.

St. James was evidently of an ardent temperament. His nature was affectionate, his feelings warm and tender; a man of heart and soul, with a touch of passion easily moved to enthusiasm, and quick to take up his work in a spirit of zealous interest. He was not one of those 'whose hearts are dry as summer dust', much less 'a man whose blood,' as Shakespeare says, 'is very snow-broth.'

For St. James and his brother St. John were called, really surnamed, by the Lord Jesus, 'Boanerges,' sons of rage, soon angry, sons of thunder. The name was no mere term of reproach, but described the naturally energetic and impetuous disposition of the men, a disposition which, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, restrained by the power of God, and elevated by His mighty grace, would make them instruments for untold

blessing. The natural endowment of an ardent and zealous nature, transformed by the indwelling Christ, and renewed by the influence of the Holy Spirit, issued in lives pervaded throughout by burning love and undying earnestness.

St. James was brought into the closest intimacy with the life and work of his Divine Master. He shared with Peter and John the privilege of being with Jesus when He raised the little daughter of Jairus. He was also present with them at the Mount of Transfiguration, and later still at the Agony of the blessed Lord in the garden of Gethsemane. We may be sure that there was some reason behind the introduction of St. James into the inner circle of confidence founded upon affection and trust. We may then claim for him that fruit of the Spirit's work which is realized in good fidelity and willingness to serve.

St. James shares with his great brother, the apostle of love, the condemnation of Christ for two specific acts.

One was their spirit of intolerance, in desiring that fire should be sent from heaven to consume the villages of the Samaritans, who seemed to be unfriendly to their Master. The spirit was in keeping with their naturally zealous natures, but it was foreign to the spirit of the loving Christ. Their zeal was a false one, their fiery enthusiasm was misdirected, but when chastened, and put upon right lines in keeping with the gracious Saviour's mission, and touched with His divine yearning, and moving in the direction of His great Love-quest, it became a mighty power for good. And out of their mistaken zeal there issued the great lesson of the divine mission of the Lord Jesus, a truth which shall be fruitful in blessing while the world shall last: 'For

the Son of Man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them.'

The other rebuke was in connexion with the petition of Salome, the mother of Zebedee's children, as she pleaded for the place of honour for James and John, at the right hand and the left of the Saviour-Judge. The request was evidently born of a desire on their part, or made with their consent, for the Lord's answer was directed to them, 'Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink the cup that I am about to drink?' And while Christ most tenderly rebuked the desire of the two, and the indignation which had sprung up in the breasts of the ten, He taught a lesson of eternal and of most precious meaning, that 'the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many'.

St. James was the first of the apostolic band called upon to drink the Saviour's cup of suffering and of death. He fell by the cruel sword of Herod Agrippa, when that monarch stretched forth his hand to vex certain of the Church. 'He killed James the brother of John with the sword.' He was thus the proto-martyr of the apostles of the Lord. And he has this unique distinction, that he is the only apostle whose martyrdom is chronicled in the pages of Holy Writ.

There is a very beautiful tradition, which has come down from the days of Clement of Alexandria, that the soldier who led St. James to the place of execution was so struck with the sublime courage of the apostle, by his gentle bearing, and his supreme faith in his Master, that he also openly acknowledged himself to be a Christian, and laid down his life as a witness for Christ. 'The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church.'

THE TRANSFIGURATION OF CHRIST[1]

August 6

The Collect

O God, who in the mount didst reveal to chosen witnesses thine only-begotten Son wonderfully transfigured, in raiment white and glistering; Mercifully grant that we, being delivered from the disquietude of this world, may be permitted to behold the King in his beauty, who with thee, O Father, and thee, O Holy Ghost, liveth and reigneth, one God, world without end. *Amen.*

O wondrous type! O vision fair
Of glory that the Church shall share;
Which Christ upon the mountain shows,
Where brighter than the sun He glows!

Anon, tr. J. M. Neale.

Lord, it is good for us to be
Entranced, enwrapt, alone with Thee;
And watch Thy glistering raiment glow
Whiter than Hermon's whitest snow,
The human lineaments that shine
Irradiant with a light divine:
Till we too change from grace to grace,
Gazing on that transfigured face.—A. P. Stanley.

THE lessons which cluster around the Transfiguration of our blessed Lord are amongst the most precious, and indeed important, connected with the acts and words of the Lord Jesus Christ.

[1] This festival occurs in the Calendar of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America.

The 'Mount' to which Jesus led the chosen three is a veritable 'Mount of Vision' for the Church in all the ages. The veil was drawn aside, and there was a true revelation of Christ, of His glorious person, of His saving work, of His future glory. It was a gracious epiphany, a loving manifestation of Christ, the Revealer of the Father, surrounded by Moses, the representative of the Law :

> Who once received on Horeb's height
> The eternal laws of truth and right;

and Elias, the leader of the prophetic band :

> Who caught the still small whisper, higher
> Than storm, than earthquake, or than fire.

It was a sign from heaven, first to three representative men, Peter, the apostle of faith, James, the apostle of hope, and John, the apostle of love, and through them to all mankind. It was a lesson in divine truth, for there the three great doctrines of our holy faith were taught clearly and distinctly—the Incarnation, the Atonement, the Resurrection-Life.

In the great design of God the Transfiguration served many important purposes.

It came to 'the man Christ Jesus' as an answer to prayer, bringing with it the bright assurance of His Father's favour, and the high inspiration of faith in His Father's loving purposes, as well as the sure confirmation of His redemptive mission, to which both law and prophecy had long borne witness.

It came to the chosen disciples as indisputable evidence of the mission of the Christ, as a sure and certain witness to the divinity of His Person, as a means of comfort to

them in the trials which they were about to face, and as a light to show them the life beyond the grave.

It comes to us through all the centuries with its rich and precious lessons of the realities of the unseen world, of God's supreme purpose in giving His beloved Son as the life of men, and it clearly indicates that all blessing centres in the Christ.

The divine record is simplicity itself, although it deals with the loftiest thought. Jesus took the three representative disciples up into a high mountain apart to pray. It is most probable that they climbed together one of the lofty slopes of majestic snow-clad Hermon, know to the Amorites as Shenir, i. e. Mont Blanc, and called by the Rabbis the snow-mountain.

There the Lord Jesus was transfigured before them. His face shone with the brightness of the sun, and His garments became white as the light, as white as the driven snow. There was shown to them as in a flash of glory, the greatness of the majesty of Christ. The glorious Godhead shone through the earthly tabernacle of mortal clay. They saw, in one swift glance of glorious insight, the Christ, and knew Him to be the Light of the Eternal. 'That was the true Light,'

> More taintless than the Morning-Star, more kin
> To Heaven than light of Heaven.

And suddenly two men, Moses and Elias, appearing in glory, talked with Jesus, and spoke of His decease, which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. Strange sight it was for mortals; for Moses, more than fourteen centuries before, had been laid in that unknown grave by 'Nebo's lonely mountain', when 'the angels of God upturned the sod, and laid the dead man there',

while Elias had been translated without death into heaven for more than nine hundred years. What a contrast was there! The disciples, with slow and painful footsteps, had climbed the lofty height, but Moses and Elias were transported thither by the power of the Almighty.

But there was more to meet their astonished gaze, and to strike upon their entranced ears. A cloud of light burst upon their eyes, luminous, suggesting, as Edersheim says, the presence of God, revealing yet concealing ; and out of the cloud a Voice, saying, ' This is My beloved ' (or elect) ' Son : hear Him.'

Is it any wonder that Peter voiced the thought of all : ' Lord, it is good for us to be here ' ? And it is good for us to contemplate the great lessons of the Transfiguration.

The outstanding thought must ever be the testimony of God to the Lord Jesus Christ. The Heavenly Voice bore witness not to a truth, however important, nor yet to a fact, however fruitful in consequences, but to a Person, to the Person of Christ, God's own ' beloved Son '. Worship is His due.

The Transfiguration shows the union of the Divine and the Human in the Lord Christ. His true Humanity is seen, it is evidenced by His prayer, but His Divinity shone forth, the Father Himself witnessing to its truth.

The Transfiguration shows the reality of the Unseen World. Life in God is manifested. There, in the light of His own Presence, God shows Himself to be the God of the living. Moses and Elias had been dead to the world for long centuries of time, Moses for a period longer than the Saxon invasion is to us, and Elias for a length of time as great as the death of William the Conqueror.

The Transfiguration throws a light upon the Resurrec-

tion. And as Christ changes our views of life and death, so God will change our mortal bodies, and make them like unto that of the glorified Christ.

The Transfiguration shows that the lives of the departed in the Lord are marked by conscious intelligence. Moses and Elias held sweet converse with Christ. The lives of the just are lived in the light of God's own presence, not in darkness and gloom.

The Transfiguration, though it leads up to high mountains of privilege, has its outlook upon duty. From the Mount of Transfiguration could be seen Golgotha's brow, the Calvary of the suffering Saviour. And when they came down from the Mount that day it was to see the sad sight of the epileptic lad, with foam on his lips, torn of body, in weakness and distress, and the baffled disciples unable to help or heal. The mount of privilege led down to the plain of opportunity. Archbishop Alexander sums up the lessons of the Transfiguration in a brief statement: 'Jesus leads His Church in the person of His disciples on to a world of *thought*, up to a world of *worship*, down to a world of *work*.'

ST. BARTHOLOMEW THE APOSTLE

August 24

The Collect

O Almighty and everlasting God, who didst give to thine Apostle Bartholomew grace truly to believe and to preach thy Word; Grant, we beseech thee, unto thy Church, to love that Word which he believed, and both to preach and receive the same; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Wouldst thou go forth to bless? be sure of thine own ground!
Fix well thy centre first, then draw thy circles round!
ABP. TRENCH.

Like to the sunlight,—gladdening, brightening all,
Quiet as dew, which no man heareth fall,—
So let thine influence be!—E. M. L. G.

A spirit whose power may touch and bind
With unconscious influence every mind;
Whose presence brings, like some fabled wand,
The love which a monarch may not command.
F. R. HAVERGAL.

He sees, beneath the fig-tree green,
Nathanael con his sacred lore;
Shouldst thou thy chamber seek, unseen,
He enters through the unopen'd door.
J. H. NEWMAN.

IT is a strange anomaly that St. Bartholomew's Day should be for ever associated in the human mind with one of the greatest tragedies and one of the most infamous crimes in all history. Yet such is the case. No more fearful scenes were ever enacted than during the massacre of St. Bartholomew's Day, when the streets of Paris ran with blood, and France saw many of her most faithful sons and daughters martyred for the faith they professed, and the fair land of the Franks suffered a loss from which she has never recovered, for the Huguenots were the saving salt amongst her people.

The son of Tolmai, or as it is more familiarly known to us, Ptolemy, mighty in war, is generally understood to be Nathanael of St. John's Gospel. Nathanael, akin to Theodore in the Greek, 'gift of God,' was probably his own name, just as Joses is called Barnabas, 'son of

consolation, or prophecy.' St. John never mentions Bartholomew, and the three synoptical Gospels never mention Nathanael; St. John places Nathanael with Philip his intimate friend, and the other three Evangelists follow the same course invariably. He always appears in the inner circle of the apostles. He has been identified with St. Matthew, but there is such a contrast between the calling of St. Matthew in the other Gospels, to that furnished by St. John, when Philip findeth Nathanael, that the identification is very improbable.

The characterization of the Lord Jesus, 'Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile,' marks out Nathanael as a man of singular beauty of life.

It is perhaps unnecessary to remark that Christ does not say sinless, as if he were perfectly holy, free from fault of guilt, or fleck or stain of sin, but guileless. The best explanation of Scripture is Scripture itself. The words of the Psalmist, where he graphically describes the blessedness of the man whose transgressions are forgiven, and in whose spirit there is no guile, form the best commentary (Ps. xxxii. 1, 2).

'Guile' is but the French form of our old Anglo-Saxon 'wile,' i. e. craft, cunning, deceit: a deceptive trick practised for ensnaring, or an artful stratagem used to gain an end.

Christ knew what was in man; He looked beneath the surface, penetrated the merely outward life, read the heart, and saw the guiding motive of the inner being. 'Behold,' said He, 'a true Israelite.' The ideal Israel is here, one in whom the old Jacob life, supplanting by deceit and trickery, is dead, and in whom Israel lives, a prince with God, conquering God by prayer, and his fellow men with humility. Here is the spiritual son of

Israel, the humble penitent soul, who has renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, and no longer shelters himself behind anything, or trusts in his own strength, but lays hold of the strength of God, and clings only to Him.

The guileless life, how beautiful it is! Jesus saw with His marvellous spiritual insight Nathanael under the fig-tree, and read his heart, as though it were a book. What happened beneath the fig-tree is known only to God. We have no record of it. But whatever it was, it revealed in a moment, as by a flash-light, his inner and secret life. It is quite possible that he was praying, perhaps in an act of confession to God of some sin which burdened his soul. He may have laid his heart bare before God, in self-examination, to see if there was any wicked way in him. Perhaps he made some vow to God, or entered into a covenant, or sought some special blessing. It may be that it marked a season of spiritual communion, or of refreshment through the special presence of God in his soul, and a renewal of spiritual strength. It matters not what were the special features of his experience under the fig-tree. Like Jacob, he was alone with God, and he came forth to meet one of the rare eulogies pronounced by Jesus, 'Behold a true Israelite.'

But there are spots on the sun, and Nathanael is not free from weaknesses. There was a narrowness in his character that we do not expect to find. He is not without prejudices. He greets Philip's earnest zeal with the chilling words, 'Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?'

Philip meets his objection with great wisdom. He already knows the unanswerable apologetic, the appeal to experience, 'Come and see.'

Nathanael's character again shines forth brightly. His

openness is apparent, his candour is in evidence. It is coupled with courage; he openly avows his heart-felt conviction, 'Thou art the Son of God, Thou art the King of Israel.'

Christ rewards his faith, a gracious promise is given to him, and indeed to his fellow believers. The spiritual Israel will see, like the great patriarch, heaven opened, 'and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.' It is a revelation of Jesus as 'the Way', the true ladder set up from earth to heaven, from man to God. It is through the Lord Jesus that the broken communication between earth and heaven is resumed, not for a brief period, but for all time. He opens the kingdom of heaven to all believers.

Nathanael's faith increases in its very exercise. He goes on from strength to strength. 'Believest thou . . . thou shalt see.' He should be led into deeper and still deeper knowledge of Christ. From His omniscience, he should soon learn His omnipresence and His omnipotence. His views of the unseen spiritual realm are to be greatly enlarged, and he will be introduced to the life of heaven in its ministry of love.

Nathanael then stands before us in the pages of Scripture in all his transparent sincerity. He is a guileless man, and reflects something of the life of Christ, of whom it was said that He was without guile. He shows himself to be a man of faith, and ready to bear testimony to the convictions of his heart. His character is open as day, noble, and true. It would seem as if Jesus saw in him the fulfilment of the beatitude, 'Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.'

ST. MATTHEW THE APOSTLE

SEPTEMBER 21

The Collect

O ALMIGHTY GOD, who by thy blessed Son didst call Matthew from the receipt of custom to be an Apostle and Evangelist; Grant us grace to forsake all covetous desires, and inordinate love of riches, and to follow the same thy Son Jesus Christ, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost, one God, world without end. *Amen.*

He sat to watch o'er Customs paid,
A man of scorned and hardened trade . . .
But grace within his breast had stirred;
There needed but the timely word . . .
He rose responsive to the call.—BRIGHT.

Who yield up all for Thy dear sake,
Let them of Matthew's wealth partake.—BRIGHT.

From all unrighteous mammon, oh give us hearts set free,
That we, whate'er our calling, may rise and follow Thee.
BISHOP WALSHAM HOW.

ST. MATTHEW'S original name was Levi, which means 'joined', or 'attached'. The word has in its root idea the thought of affection, and fell from the lips of Leah, as the proper name for her third son, as she felt that his birth would awaken greater love in the heart of Jacob her husband, 'Now this time will my husband be joined unto me, because I have borne him three sons.'

The change of name to Matthew, or more properly Mattathias, of which it is a contraction, with its singularly beautiful meaning of 'the gift of Jehovah', pro-

bably took place when he was called by Jesus to the office and work of an apostle. There was nothing unusual in a change of name, such as this, when a change of position took place, or at some great crisis in life. We have similar instances in St. Peter, and St. Paul, who were given new names for their new work.

St. Matthew, before he was called by Christ, was a 'publican', or tax-gatherer. He belonged to a class of people hated and despised by the Jews. The very term was synonymous in their minds with sinner and heathen, the office was held in such supreme contempt. They were looked down upon as a vile and degraded set of men, to be abhorred of all right-minded people, and ostracized by society. The rabbins argued, that as one robber disgraced a whole family, so a publican brought dishonour upon his relatives. No promise need be kept, they said, with questionable morality, with murderers, thieves, and publicans. They could give no testimony in court, and their very offerings would defile the synagogue alms-box, or the temple corban.

The reason of this universal hatred was that most Jews considered it unlawful to pay tribute to a heathen power. And that a Jew should prove a traitor to his country, prove false to the hopes of Israel, and sell his services to a Roman, become a creature of their stern conquerors, was in the popular mind to sink to the lowest depth of infamy. The taxes and customs of provinces were, in the first place, sold to the Roman knights, who were great capitalists, and then farmed out by them to local men, who, having paid a large fixed sum for the privilege, endeavoured to exact as much as possible from the people, often by cruel extortion, and by the use of unscrupulous means.

There are many most impressive and helpful lessons in connexion with St. Matthew.

The call of Matthew, and his quick response, how full of instruction it is! He tells the story himself, in a most graphic way: Jesus 'saw a man, named Matthew, sitting at the receipt of custom: and He saith unto him, Follow Me. And he arose, and followed Him.'

There was first of all cheerful obedience on the part of Matthew. He no sooner heard Jesus call him to His service, than he obeyed immediately. The call of grace, the voice of love, led to instant obedience. The heart of the man yielded to the personal attraction of Jesus, and his will to His personal authority and influence.

The decision was immediate, and it was followed by the appropriate action. There was no questioning, no delay, no tarrying for a more convenient season. 'He arose, and followed Him.'

St. Matthew displayed the spirit of the most splendid self-sacrifice. He forsook his calling, a most lucrative one, affording an easy road to wealth. He faced an outlook which had nothing before it but difficulty and trial, certain poverty and probable persecution, possibly death. He humbly yielded up all for Christ, he boldly faced all for Christ.

St. Matthew showed as well the most magnificent courage. He had to face not only opposition, but that which is far more difficult to meet, railing and ridicule from his friends.

There was shown also by St. Matthew the most generous hospitality. In it he magnified the grace of God, what great things Christ had done for him. He brought together the Saviour and those who needed the help of the loving Christ.

The decision to follow Jesus, his cheerful and ready obedience, his genuine spirit of self-sacrifice, brought with them all a rich reward. He became the author of the First Gospel story, and won for himself a name richer far in glory than that gained by many kings and mighty men of earth. His name shall never die, and thousands have derived blessing through his labours. Riches take wings and fly away, 'we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out,' but the truth ever lives on, and souls won for Christ are saved in an eternal salvation. There are 'words writ in waters', and saddest of all epitaphs is that, 'Here lies one whose name was writ in water,' but of Matthew it might be said that he left behind,

> A voice that in the distance far away
> Wakens the slumbering ages.

ST. MICHAEL AND ALL ANGELS

SEPTEMBER 29

The Collect

O EVERLASTING GOD, who hast ordained and constituted the services of Angels and men in a wonderful order; Mercifully grant, that as thy holy Angels alway do thee service in heaven, so by thy appointment they may succour and defend us on earth; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

> And thou, at last,
> When time itself must die,
> Shalt sound that dread and piercing blast,
> To wake the dead, and rend the vaulted sky,
> And summon all to meet the Omniscient
> Judge on high. J. H. NEWMAN.

The angels come and go, the messengers of God.
R. H. STODDARD.

Angels, unseen, attend the saints,
And bear them in their arms,
To cheer their spirit when it faints,
And guard their life from harms.—JOHN NEWTON.

God called the nearest angels who dwell with Him above,
The tender one was Pity, and the dearest one was Love.
J. G. WHITTIER.

THE spiritual world, which to mortals is the realm of the unseen, is a great and glorious reality. The Bible treats it everywhere as belonging to the certainties of existence. The sacred writers, speaking under inspiration, use language of conviction; they are moving in the region of fact, not of theory, just as the scientist writes of the physical world when he wishes to explain it. There are more than six hundred passages in the Bible used of the Holy Spirit to teach mankind the truths of the spiritual, the unseen, but most real world.

God, the great Father, the Supreme Spirit, has placed in His universe of being vast numbers of spirits, for the purpose of carrying out His holy will and pleasure. The Scriptures speak of them as 'an innumerable company of angels', and Milton loved to think that:

Millions of spiritual creatures walk the earth
Unseen, both when we wake and when we sleep.

The subject of Angelology has not received the attention it deserves, from the fear of Angelolatry, a very real danger, which must be jealously guarded against, for man has ever been prone to creature worship. But while we watch against any view of angels which would derogate from the person and work of Christ, with whose

glorious ministry they are hardly to be mentioned in the same breath, still we do well to remember the important revelations God has made concerning them.

The nature of angels has been made clear by the inspired Word. 'Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to do service for the sake of them that shall inherit salvation?' (Heb. i. 14, R.V.). They are spirits. They are invisible, coming and going, unseen to mortal eyes. The comparisons of Scripture are suggestive. When they minister in the world, they are likened to winds; when before the throne, to flames of fire. God is thus able to transform them and to ally them to material substances as His work requires. Their spiritual natures fit them for communication with the spiritual in man. They are ministering spirits, serving God and His children upon earth. They are messengers, as their name implies, sent forth on a ministry of love.

The ministry of the angels is also described in God's Word. They are ministers of grace. They carry messages from heaven to earth (Matt. i. 20). They guide the people of God in the path of life (Exod. xiv. 19). They are the defenders of God's children against spiritual enemies and bodily dangers (2 Kings vi. 16, 17; Acts xii. 7). They are the guardians of Christ's little ones (Matt. xviii. 10). They watch for the spirit of repentance in the hearts of men, and fill heaven with joy when the sinner turns to God (Luke xv. 10). They carry the believer's soul at death to the paradise of God (Luke xvi. 22). They are ministers of comfort to the Christian in difficulty and perplexity (Acts xxvii. 23). They have a thousand and one missions of love and ministries of grace, serving Christ and Christ's redeemed without ceasing. They have a ministry of judgement as well as

of mercy, for, at the Saviour's second coming, they will separate the just from the unjust, and gather Christ's saints about His glorious person.

There are various ranks of angels in God's service. It would appear that there are seven gradations in the angelic hierarchy. They are described as: archangels, principalities, authorities (powers), thrones, dominions, and spirits.

Michael the archangel, whose name is so full of meaning, 'who is like unto God,' has been identified by many scholars with the Angel of the Covenant, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. The connexion is certainly very close, but the language of St. Jude is more in keeping with an archangel than it would be of the Divine Son. Michael is in any case a great prince, to whom is entrusted a mighty work for God and His Church. Gabriel, who bears a name which means 'man of God', or 'hero of God', appears ever in the spirit of sympathetic interest, bringing good cheer to the heart.

But however rich in blessing is the ministry of angels to man, it must never be dissociated from the Person and work of our Lord Jesus Christ. We are three times in Scripture forbidden to offer any prayers to them. And indeed why should we wish to do so?

> The angels' Lord Himself is nigh
> To them that love His name;
> Ready to save them when they cry,
> And put their foes to shame.

ST. LUKE THE EVANGELIST

October 18

The Collect

Almighty God, who calledst Luke the Physician, whose praise is in the Gospel, to be an Evangelist, and Physician of the soul; May it please thee, that, by the wholesome medicines of the doctrine delivered by him, all the diseases of our souls may be healed; through the merits of thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

The witness of the Saviour's life,
The great Apostle's chosen friend
Through weary years of toil and strife,
And still found faithful to the end.

Abp. Maclagan.

Is it not Luke, Physician Heaven-beloved?
The everlasting Gospel's word his praise?
He in our firmament has lit new rays;
Oh! by his later star illumined, we
The Christ behold. Morgan.

ST. LUKE, the beloved physician, the Evangelist 'whose praise in the Gospel' is in all the churches, bears a Greek name. It has a most beautiful meaning, in thorough keeping with his life and character, 'light-giving.'

The details of his life are scanty. He is only mentioned three times in the New Testament by name. In the Epistle to the Colossians we read of 'Luke the beloved physician', in that to Timothy, St. Paul says 'only Luke is with me', and in that to Philemon, St. Paul speaks of him as a fellow-labourer.

Tradition has been busy, however, where history has been silent. The early Fathers thought that he was of Jewish origin, but it seems more probable that he was a Gentile, first converted to Judaism and then to Christianity. It was a general opinion in the early Church that he was one of the seventy disciples, sent out by our Blessed Lord. Theophylact thought that he was one of the two disciples who walked with Jesus on the Emmaus road. The pious opinion that he was a painter, as well as a physician, rests only on the statement of Nicephorus (A. D. 980), and probably arose from the artistic quality in his writings, which are crowded with picturesque features and effects. He was beyond question a word painter.

It is quite possible, however, to form a definite idea of his character, and to gain a fairly good view of his personality.

St. Luke is first seen clearly, as a companion of St. Paul in that critical hour when the religion of Jesus Christ, which had been the 'Light of Asia', passed to Europe as the dawn breaking upon the nations and arising in glory to become the very 'Light of the World'. St. Luke himself furnished the picture, limned on page more lasting than any canvas, of the man of Macedonia uttering his piercing cry, voicing the deepest spiritual need, 'Come over . . . and help us.' 'When he (St. Paul) had seen the vision, straightway *we* sought to go forth into Macedonia.' He became the loved and trusted friend of St. Paul, in a life of the most fruitful service.

St. Luke is described as a physician.

He was a member of a learned profession, which has been honoured throughout all history not only by the splendid men who have embraced it as a vocation, but

also by its incalculable services to suffering humanity. In St. Luke's day it was the most lucrative of all the professions. The healing art in those early days was practically a secret, known only to the select few, handed down from father to son, looked upon as supernatural in its character. The physician was a man of liberal education and of intellectual tastes. It is worthy of note that such a man as St. Luke, with his highly cultivated intelligence and scientific acquirements, so fully accepted the Gospel of Christ.

St. Luke became an Evangelist.

He practised as a physician and preached as an evangelist. He was the first of that noble band of 'medical missionaries', those devoted men and women who give promise of solving the missionary problems of the far east. The division of labour that dissociated the healing of the body from that of the soul has long done injury to the missionary work of the Church.

But it is as a writer of the inspired Word that St. Luke's chief glory lies. He has given us the Gospel of Humanity. Its key-note is the goodwill of God towards men, the sweet gospel of His divine pity, the message of His glorious salvation, the universality of His work of redeeming love, the free and full forgiveness of God to all who come to Christ in trusting faith. He is the historian of the birth of Christ, of His infant years, of His holy childhood. He paints the picture of the Christ, the loving Saviour, the gracious Redeemer, as *Christus Consolator*, seeking the lost, caring for the wretched, the poor, and the despised. In this Gospel, as Dean Farrar points out, Christ comes with a carol and departs with a benediction.

St. Luke's pen also gave us the wonderful account of the foundation of the Christian Church, 'The Acts

of the Apostles ' as we know the book, but re-named in our own day, ' The Acts of the Holy Spirit.' It is the marvellous record of what God hath wrought in His saving work through the instrumentality of man, informed and inhabited by His Holy Spirit. We can never estimate, humanly speaking, the debt we owe to St. Luke in his graphic narrative. But for his pen, many of the chief characters so faithfully delineated would be unknown to us. Stephen is an instance in point. If he did not stand before us in the sacred page, he would have had no existence to us, and his part in the drama of human history would have ' been clean forgotten and out of mind '. Whereas, as St. Luke pictures him for us, in the sublime tragedy of his death, we have one of the noblest creations in all literature. The dramatic description of his martyrdom is unrivalled in its fascinating power upon the mind. We need but little imagination to see for ourselves the angel-face in its upward gaze, the flash of heaven's own light is on it as he sees the ' glory of God ', and we can hear his accents of forgiveness, as he prays, ' Lord, lay not this sin to their charge.'

St. Luke was a man with a most affectionate nature. He had a great capacity for love. St. Paul could call him, after long experience of him, ' the beloved.'

He was a man of most marked modesty of character. Never once, in his important writings, does he tell us his name, nor yet furnish any hint of his identity. He paints Christ, he places the results of Christ's work in the light, but he remains himself in the dark.

St. Luke was wise to win souls. He knew well the art, and practised it constantly, of healing them. He took them to Jesus the great Physician.

St. Luke's character was marked by faithful consistency. The story of his faithfulness, of his moral heroism, of his sincere devotion, of his perfect friendship, is told by St. Paul in five short words, 'Only Luke is with me.' He followed him to prison, and stood ready to follow him to death.

The foundation of his character was his faith in Christ. It was Christ in him, the hope of glory, that made him the man he was. It was the Spirit of Christ working through him that made him such an instrument of blessing in all the ages of the Church's history. His name is honoured wherever Christ is known and loved, it is, as it signifies, a guiding light leading the mind of man into the truth of God. Of him it may be truly said, that he held forth the Word of Life.

ST. SIMON AND ST. JUDE, APOSTLES

OCTOBER 28

The Collect

O ALMIGHTY GOD, who hast built thy Church upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the head corner-stone; Grant us so to be joined together in unity of spirit by their doctrine, that we may be made an holy temple acceptable unto thee; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Thou to wax fierce
In the cause of the Lord,
To threat and to pierce
With the heavenly sword.—J. H. NEWMAN.

One, whose zeal by Thee enlighten'd
Burn'd anew with nobler flame;
One, the kinsman of Thy childhood,
Brought at last to know Thy name.

JOHN ELLERTON.

So works the All-wise, our services dividing
Not as we ask:
For the world's profit, by our gifts deciding
Our duty task.

J. H. NEWMAN.

THERE was a great purpose to be served, in the plan adopted by our Lord Jesus Christ, in sending out His chosen apostles and disciples 'by two and two'. He at once secured mutual co-operation, help, and sympathy. The deficiences of one would also be made up by the other.

St. Simon was surnamed the Zealot. He is known in Scripture as Simon Zelotes, or the Kanaanite. The term Kanaanite does not refer to the old nationality, but is from the Hebrew, and is equivalent to the Greek 'Zelotes', meaning zeal. He had evidently belonged to the fanatical sect which had taken the last words of Mattathias, the father of Judas Maccabaeus, as their motto, 'Be ye zealous for the Law, and give your lives for the covenant of your fathers.' The very name shows that he was an intensely patriotic man, filled with an undying love for his native land, and ready to suffer, and if need be die, for its freedom. There was coupled with this burning love for his country a devout zeal for the honour of the Law. The hatred on the part of the Zealots of the Roman yoke was an absorbing passion, which often swept every other consideration aside and led to many excesses.

St. Jude is a character of peculiar interest. His surname is given in some texts as Lebbaeus, in others as Thaddaeus. The etymology of the names is obscure, indeed doubtful. It has been suggested that they are derived from the Hebrew *leeb*, ' heart ', and the Aramaic *thad*, 'breast,' or from *hodah*, 'praise.' There was a certain fitness, then, in the coupling of St. Simon with St. Jude ; zeal for the Lord walking hand in hand with courage.

St. Jude was of the blood royal, a descendant of the great King David. He called himself, ' servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James,' who was known as the Lord's brother, which is generally taken to mean the cousin, of the Lord Jesus. There is a very interesting personal touch in the story which Hegessipus tells of the emperor Domitian. It is said that the emperor, hearing that there were men still living related by ties of blood to Him whom Christians adored as Lord over all, the King immortal, eternal, and learning that to the descendants of David there was a promise according to the Jews of universal dominion, he was conscience-stricken at the thought of his many crimes. His father Vespasian had made diligent search for any of the royal seed throughout Palestine. Domitian banished the apostle John from his episcopal oversight at Ephesus to the quarries of the rocky isle of Patmos. He ordered his secret service informers to bring before him any of the ' relations of our Lord ' who could be found. But he soon dismissed his fears when he saw the grandsons of Jude, with their poor peasant garments, their horny hands of toil, and when he heard them state that their sole earthly possessions consisted of some thirty-nine acres of land, on which they paid taxes to the emperor. And his mind was set at rest when he learned from their lips that

the kingdom of Christ is not of this world, but heavenly, belonging to the heart and mind, in a spiritual kingship over the consciences of men. He dismissed them altogether when they told him that at the end of the world Christ would appear in glory, and that he would judge both the quick and the dead. For his fears were only for the present, the future and unseen had no terrors for him.

There are lessons for our times from the life and character of Simon the Zealot. For Christianity appeals not only to the intellect, but moves the heart as well. It demands earnestness of purpose in the face of the evils it sets itself to cure. Indeed it is born of the Spirit of God, the Spirit of fire, the Spirit of burning. The Christian should be zealous, boiling with enthusiasm as the word really means, full of ardour for the cause of Christ, and ready to make sacrifices for its extension in the world. The need of the day is that of men who are like Basil, of whom it was said that he was 'a-fire for God'. When some one asked what kind of man Basil was, the story is that he was given a vision of a pillar of fire, with this motto: *Talis est Basilius*—'He is all on fire, alight for God.' We need more men of the spirit of the scholarly Bishop Jewel, who declared: 'I rejoice that my body is exhausted in the labours of my holy calling.' And the Church has much to gain, and nothing to lose, when there are found in its ranks men who feel like the saintly Andrew Melville, when fault was found with him for his burning zeal: 'If you see my fire go downwards, set your foot upon it and put it out; but if it go upwards, let it return to its own place.'

And there are lessons, too, from the character of St. Jude, if his name is an expression of his life. For

the world sadly needs, not only men of thought and action, but also men of 'heart':

> Sympathy is welcome, like the flowers,
> And hungry hearts are waiting for ours,
> In this world, far and near.

And what greater need is there in the world to-day than that of courage. Moral courage is not only much more difficult to attain than physical courage, but it is also a rarer virtue. It is this great quality that St. Peter has in mind, when he writes: 'Add to your faith virtue,' that is, moral courage. It is that resoluteness of purpose which enables a man to face all, and dare all, and brave all for a principle which he believes to be true. It is that high resolve which aims at the fulfilment of life's purpose. It was this that enabled the noble Milton, after five years of blindness, to undertake his tremendous literary tasks, and to say in that spirit of faith from which true courage springs, that he did not 'bate a jot of heart or hope, but still bore up and steered "*Uphillward*"'. Love is its motive power. Courage is associated with the affections—a courageous heart, and we know that it is 'perfect love that casteth out fear'.

The Gospels everywhere bear witness to the sublime courage of Christ. He faced without flinching every form of man's hatred and opposition. He met at every point the attacks of the adversary of souls. He never swerved from His high purpose of redeeming love, though it led to cross-crowned Calvary. And it is to Christ that we must look, if we are to have the true spirit of Christian zeal, the mind which was in Christ Jesus, filled with a sympathy divine, and a heart of courage to love the truth and live it in our lives.

ALL SAINTS' DAY

NOVEMBER 1

The Collect

O ALMIGHTY GOD, who hast knit together thine elect in one communion and fellowship, in the mystical body of thy Son Christ our Lord; Grant us grace so to follow thy blessed Saints in all virtuous and godly living, that we may come to those unspeakable joys, which thou hast prepared for them that unfeignedly love thee; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Saints of the early dawn of Christ,
Saints of imperial Rome,
Saints of the martyred faithful ones,
Saints of the modern home;
Saints of the marts and busy streets,
Saints of the squalid lanes,
Saints of the silent solitudes,
Of the prairies and the plains.

EDWIN HATCH, D.D.

One feast, of holy days the crest,
I, though no Churchman, love to keep,
All-Saints—the unknown good that rest
In God's still memory folded deep.

J. R. LOWELL.

THE Festival of All Saints is full of poetry in its conception. It is the day of all the Christian heroes and saints of God, who have loved and followed their Leader, the great Captain of our Salvation.

Its position in the Church Year, so near its close, is in itself significant. It seems fitting that it should precede Advent, which so soon follows. It strikes

a fitting note of holy preparation and of glad expectation, for the King is coming to claim His own.

The historical value of the day should not be overlooked. There is true philosophy in the method employed. It was Thucydides who said that 'history is philosophy learned from examples'. And the Church of God uses the day to bring home to every fresh school of disciples the imperishable lessons of the spiritual experiences of those who have followed Christ in His holy life.

It is with joy and gladness that we thus remember 'the noble army of martyrs', and all who have joined that 'God-lit cloud of witnesses', yea, all who follow the Lamb in His holy life, not only where 'beyond these voices there is peace', but amidst the labour and turmoil of the world. For to-day is the day of all God's saints, of all holy and true souls in all ages, in all climes, and of all conditions, who, trusting in Jesus, and yielding themselves to His will, filled with His Spirit, have loved and served Him. They are the joy of heaven's courts, and the salt of the earth, who save the world from corruption and decay:

> Such lived not in the past alone,
> But tread to-day the unheeding street,
> And stairs to sin and famine known
> Sing with welcome to their feet;
> The den they enter grows a shrine,
> The grimy sash an oriel burns,
> Their cup of water warms like wine,
> Their speech is filled from heavenly urns.

We keep alive the memory of the brave soldiers of the cross, of all who have followed the gleam, of all who have loved the truth, of all who have stood for the right, of

all who have endured hardness and suffered reproach for His dear name, of all who have met and suffered cruel persecution ; and we recount their brave and self-sacrificing deeds, and rejoice in their lives of loving service for Christ and His Church.

Not one is forgotten of God. The world seldom knows its greatest benefactors. The Church is sometimes forgetful of her noblest sons, or blind to their highest services, as when, under the Old Covenant, the fathers stoned the prophets who in a later generation were held in highest honour. And of the Lord Jesus Himself, the 'King of saints', it is written that 'He came unto His own, and His own received Him not'. But God knows His saints, however poor, however despised of men, though they be ill-used and persecuted, and treated as were the apostles, as the off-scouring of all things. God sees beneath their poverty, and beneath what men think is ignorance, their true life, the glory of the light of Christ, and whatever their earthly lot they walk with Him in white, for they are worthy.

A modern poet has sung a plaintive lay, recording what is thought to be the neglect of 'The saints that have no day'. But there are none such with God, in heaven's roll of honour, or for that matter in the Church of Christ :

With golden letters set in brave array
  Throughout the Church's record of the year,
  The great names of historic saints appear,
Those ringing names that, as a trumpet, play
Uplifting music o'er a sordid way,
  And sound high courage to our earth-dulled ear.
  But, underneath those strains, I seem to hear
The silence of the saints that have no day.

The Church would not forget even one, and for that reason she commemorates all the saints of the most High on this glad day. What men call failure upon earth may in the record of heaven be the very highest success. 'They never fail who die in a great cause.' And God, who sees all, and knows all, sees that justice is done to His own. The wisest of men make mistakes. 'There are,' said Colton, 'many saints who have been canonized who ought to have been cannonaded.' But God never makes mistakes, and every child of God is able to take the words of Thackeray, and make them his own, as he moralizes on the world's estimate, 'What boots it whether it be Westminster or a little country spire which covers your ashes?' Yea, what matter when we know that,

> Behind the dim unknown,
> Standeth God within the shadow, keeping watch above His own!

We do not pray to the saints, nor seek the intercession of those who have passed beyond the vail. 'Let not our religion,' as St. Augustine said, 'be the cultus of dead men.' For God has raised His voice of warning against trust in man whether living or dead, as Origen points out, fitly producing as an example, 'Cursed is the man who hopeth in man.' But we do commemorate the glorious victories of faith, and we remember that every good and perfect gift is from God, that all is of grace. We take to heart the inspiring lesson, that the saints of God were mortals like ourselves, and that,

> They with united breath
> Ascribe their conquest to the Lamb,
> Their triumph to His death.

All Saints' Day is full of comfort to Christian souls. It is instinct with hope. It fills the mind with gracious memories of the past, and of undying hope for the future.

All Saints' Day furnishes the Christian with a call to service for Christ and humanity. It is for this reason that the striking lesson is read of the roll of heroes and of holy men and women, who seeing Him who is invisible, lived for God and good, and we are taught to pray for grace to enable us to follow them, 'in all virtuous and godly living.'

All Saints' Day reminds us of the unity of the Church of God, lifts our eyes above the scenes of sense and time, and brings to our view the fullness of privilege in the Church of Christ:

> One family we dwell in Him,
> One Church, above, beneath,

knit together in one communion and fellowship, in the mystical body of Christ.

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